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Pg 52

SHOCKING!
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GREAT EGGS

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HEALTHY RECIPES

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H&M

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AVEDA
EARTHMONTH2015



WHEN YOU
PROTECT WATER
YOU PROTECT
WHAT YOU LOVE



HELP US
REACH OUR
S\$12,500
EARTH MONTH GOAL

WHAT ON EARTH?

Every April is Earth Month at Aveda, and we're dedicating a month of activities to protecting water, our planet's most vital resource. Since 1999, Aveda has raised more than US\$38 million in support of organisations that directly affect environmental change, with more than US\$32 million supporting clean water projects around the world.

WATER IS LIFE

Water gives life to what we love, including our children, animals and habitat. However, clean water is scarce in some developing nations where more than 4,000 children die each day due to contaminated water. Aveda hopes to raise awareness of the environmental responsibility to treasure water in its annual fundraiser Walk for Water, and aims to raise S\$12,500 in support of local environment-related projects.

JOIN THE AVEDA WALK FOR WATER 2015

Join us in a 4.8 kilometre nature walk, symbolic of the average distance women in developing countries walk each day to collect water for their families. 100% of our proceeds go into supporting Singapore Environment Council programmes that promote environmental consideration and urban sustainability for a sustainable future.

12 April 2015, 8.30am to 11.30am

ADMISSION FEE*: S\$25 for Adult / S\$12 for Child**

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FAMILY BUNDLE*: \$65 (2 Adults + 2 Children**)

For more information, visit www.shape.com.sg/avedawalkforwater or call 6329 1555 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm).

* Not inclusive of 7% GST.

** Children should be 12 years old and below and accompanied by adults. Not recommended for children under six due to terrain and walking distance.

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Environment
Council

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Cover girl **LINDE S/AVE**
Photography **WONG WEI LIANG**
Styling **DOPHIN YEO**
Assisted by **ANGELA CHU**
Art direction **RAY TICSAY**
Hair **EILEEN KOH (9386-8930), USING REDKEN**
Makeup **KEITH BRYANT LEE/ATELIER, USING LAURA MERCIER**
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Group Editor-In-Chief **Caroline Ngui** (nguisc@sph.com.sg)
Group Editor **Raymond Goh** (raygoh@sph.com.sg)
Editor **Li Yuling** (liyuling@sph.com.sg)
Writers **Estelle Low** (sylow@sph.com.sg) • **Dawn Chen** (dawnchen@sph.com.sg)
Executive Sub-Editor **Sandra Campbell** (sandrac@sph.com.sg)
Creative Director **Jonathan Chia** (jonchia@sph.com.sg)
Associate Art Director **Ray Christian Ticsay** (rayt@sph.com.sg)
Designer **Lana Nguyen** (nlan@sph.com.sg)
Chief Photographer **Veronica Tay** (verontay@sph.com.sg)
Executive Photographers **Frenchescar Lim** (frenchl@sph.com.sg) • **Tan Wei Te** (tanweite@sph.com.sg)
Photographers **Darren Chang** (darrenc@sph.com.sg) • **Jasper Yu** (jaspersyu@sph.com.sg)
• **Vee Chin** (veechin@sph.com.sg) • **Vernon Wong** (vernwong@sph.com.sg)
• **Winston Chuang** (wchuang@sph.com.sg) • **Wong Wei Liang** (wongwl@sph.com.sg)
• **Zaphs Zhang** (teolc@sph.com.sg)
Contributing Photography Assistant **Angela Guo**
Editorial Support Executive **Jacqueline Yik** (jacyik@sph.com.sg)

Creative Services Editors **Daryl Tan** (tandaryl@sph.com.sg) • **O Thiam Chin** (otchin@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Contributing Editor **Grace Chua** (cshgrace@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Associate Editor **Cadence Loh** (cadence@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Senior Writer **Nida Seah** (seahnida@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Assistant Project Manager **Nurasyidah Abdul Razak** (nsyidah@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Art Director **Neccol Woo** (neccolw@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Associate Art Director **Feng Ling** (lingfeng@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Senior Designer **Adeline Eng** (enggh@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Designer **Tham Siew Yee** (thamsy@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Contributing Designer **Eunice Tan** (eytan@sph.com.sg)
Creative Services Executive **Martha Chin** (mnychin@sph.com.sg)
Senior Manager, Administration and Editorial Support Unit **Juliana Chong** (julianac@sph.com.sg)
Editorial Support Manager **Alice Han** (tayaha@sph.com.sg)
Senior Editorial Coordinator **Munirah Abdul Rahman** (munirahr@sph.com.sg)

Managing Director **Maureen Wee** (weekfm@sph.com.sg)
General Manager **Diana Lee** (leemld@sph.com.sg)
Senior Director – Sales **Alice Rappa** (alicere@sph.com.sg)
Associate Ad Sales Director **Korena Soo** (korenas@sph.com.sg)
Senior Account Manager **Andy Peh** (andypeh@sph.com.sg)
Assistant Account Manager **Teo Tai Hong** (thteo@sph.com.sg)
Associate Ad Sales Director (Key Account Management) **Diana Wong** (dwong@sph.com.sg)
Group Account Manager (Key Account Management) **Amelia Ooi** (ameoio@sph.com.sg)
Assistant Account Manager (Key Account Management) **Melissa Loh** (mioh@sph.com.sg)
Marketing Team Head **Patricia Ong** (patong@sph.com.sg)
Marketing Team Lead **Caron Chan** (ccaron@sph.com.sg)
Publishing Services Team Head **Clara Ng** (clarang@sph.com.sg)
Senior Publishing Services Executive **Mustapha Mohamed** (musmohd@sph.com.sg)
Senior Director – Sales (Regional) **Alice Rappa** (alicere@sph.com.sg)
Senior Account Manager (Regional) **Andy Peh** (andypeh@sph.com.sg)

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Chief Executive Officer **Loh Yew Seng** (lohys@sph.com.sg)
Strategic Planning Director **Foong Seong Khong** (foongsk@sph.com.sg)
Publishing Services Director **Leong Tscheng Yee** (leongty@sph.com.sg)
Corporate Communications Head **Chin Soo Fang** (soofang@sph.com.sg)
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Just keep swimming

If you watched *Finding Nemo*, you'd remember Dory and her mantra: Just keep swimming, just keep swimming...

That ditty plays in my head as I think about the five local athletes we've profiled in this issue's *Wonder Women* showcase, which commemorates International Women's Day on March 8.

The women – a wakeboarder, netballer, bowler, rhythmic gymnast and a swimmer – have very different personalities, but share the same attitude towards training and competing. They simply keep at it – even when things get tough. Read all about them from pg 38.

We hope you will be as inspired as we are by their willpower. Please join us in supporting them this June at the SEA Games here. The last time it was held in Singapore was 22 years ago, so we're really looking forward to catching the live action!

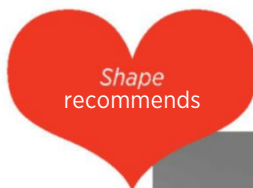
This month, we also celebrate fitness in a big way with 32 pages of tips and exercises of different difficulty levels, so you're bound to find something useful and enjoyable.

We review the latest hybrid spinning classes (pg 50) that go beyond chasing RPM (revolutions per minute), feature nine ways to refresh your usual gym routines (pg 54), and put together a trail running quick-start guide – complete with shoes, routes and training plans – that starts on pg 70.

Losing the post-CNY bulge should get easier after this. Don't give up. Just keep... going!

LI YULING
EDITOR

(liyuling@sph.com.sg)



WEAR STRIPES
They're in vogue, plus they can really slim a silhouette. See pg 116.



SKIP FOR CHARITY
Join the Strength for Life Skipping Rope Charity Challenge (pg 22) to help fund cataract surgery for needy elderly. Need to train? Try the plan on pg 52.



ENJOY EGGS
Make a healthier brunch at home with our recipes on pg 96.



JOIN OUR FITNESS FIESTA
Kick-start your weight loss with this mass workout. Turn to pg 20.

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Back on track

I stopped reading your magazine seven years ago when work and motherhood took over. Meanwhile, I attended pilates classes and took walks in the parks to keep fit. This year, I have decided to be more motivated and guess what I thought of to help kick-start my running regime? *Shape*. I am going to use your wonderful articles to help me. I'm now one of your digital subscribers, so no excuses not to read your magazine. Looking forward to running my second half marathon this year.

Lynda Tan

Ed's note: Good on you, Lynda! This will be the year you get in great shape.

Healthy eats

Like many Singaporeans, I'm a big foodie. The first thing I do when I get my copy of *Shape* is to turn to the food pages. I'm also weight-conscious, so I love reading about wholesome meal ideas and tips on eating better. Please keep these stories coming.

Nuraini Bte Abdul



Great recommendations

The January issue was really helpful. You had so many fitness class reviews. I've been wondering whether to join a gym this year. Now I'm really curious about some of the classes you featured, and I think I might just sign up for a trial. Thanks for the hard work.

Janine Soh



Lynda wins a Dr. Jart+ V7 Skin Rejuvenating Set worth \$183. Get noticeably brighter, more hydrated skin with the Dr. Jart+ V7 series. Infused with seven vitamins, its powerful formula combats dark spots, freckles and an uneven skin tone due to ageing and UV rays. This set includes Rejuvenating BB Beauty Balm Silver Label+ SPF35/PA++ Whitening (40ml), V7 Cleansing Foam (100ml), V7 Radiance Serum (50ml), and V7 Radiance Toner (150ml).

WRITE TO US AND WIN!

Tell us how our articles have inspired you to improve your life and you stand a chance to win a prize. Send your letters to: *Shape*, Readers Speak Out, 82 Genting Lane, Level 7, Singapore 349567 or e-mail us at magshape@sph.com.sg. Please include your full name and daytime contact details.

SHAPE BUZZ

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Love a good bargain? Asics has just opened its first factory outlet store at #02-20 Changi City Point. Awesome deals!



These new skin savers from Sephora are just what we need to soothe and pamper tired complexions.

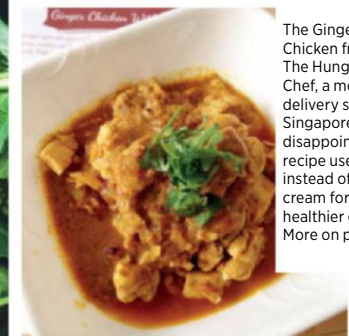


Monday motivation.

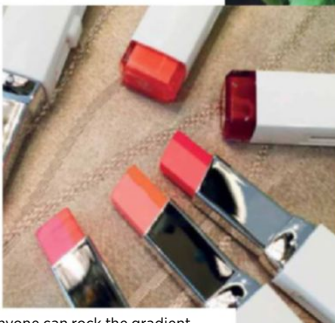
The rich scents of the Jo Malone Rock The Ages limited edition collection will take you through different periods of British history.



We love discovering unique greens to up our daily veggie intake. The romanesco broccoli tastes like cauliflower, but has the crunch of broccoli.



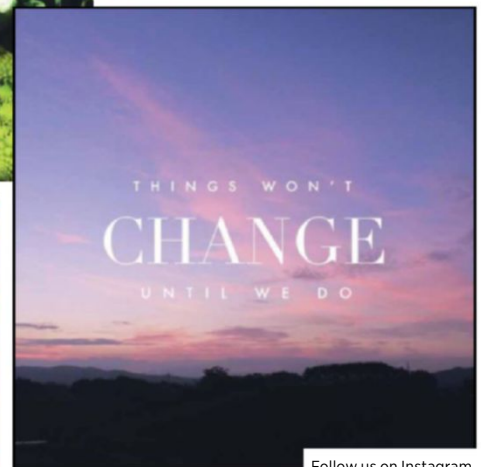
The Ginger Chicken from The Hungry Chef, a meal kit delivery service in Singapore, did not disappoint. The recipe uses yogurt instead of coconut cream for a lighter, healthier gravy. More on pg 82.



Anyone can rock the gradient lipstick effect with Laneige's Two Tone Lip Bar (\$34). Pick your favourite colour and swipe it on!



We're stoked about Puma's sports collection for the first quarter of 2015: New and improved running shoes, plus sports bras with fun prints. Nice!



Follow us on Instagram for daily news and inspiring quotes.

In the March issue...



Pg 28 View more photos in our gallery.



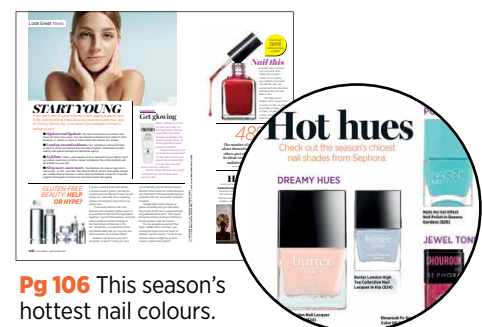
Pg 30 Take our interactive quiz!



Pg 70 Get more trail running routes and see details of featured shoes.



Pg 88 Extra tips on picking a healthier sauce.



Pg 106 This season's hottest nail colours.

Get more with our digital edition

Now available at



Shape *Your Life*

FIND BALANCE EVERY DAY!

Power napping

Why trade coffee for a quick midday shut-eye? **Napping is much better at boosting your brain – especially its performance at memory tasks – than caffeine**, says Sara Mednick, a US-based sleep researcher. She adds: “NASA studies have conclusively demonstrated that alertness increases by as much as 100 per cent after a brief nap, even in well-rested subjects.” Even if you got enough sleep last night, a lunchtime snooze can still benefit you. Turn the page for more reasons to nap.



TEXT LEE YING PHOTO PAUL BURNS/CULTURA/CORBIS



BEWARE THE “WTH” EFFECT

You must be thinking: WTH? But it's a real occurrence, say researchers. When you find yourself thinking that you might as well have another slice of cake, since you've already had one, you're experiencing the “what the hell” effect. Roy Baumeister, professor of psychology at Florida State University in the US and co-author of Willpower, says this is a big reason diets fail. People let go of self-control after caving in to a craving. In the book, Roy argues that willpower is a finite resource that may depend on your energy levels, among other things. So, if you've had an exhausting day, steer clear of temptations – or you'd never stop at one dessert.

WHY SNOOZE

American sleep researcher Sara Mednick gives three compelling reasons to take a catnap. Find more in her book *Take A Nap! Change Your Life* (US\$15 or S\$19.90, www.saramednick.com).

- 1 Make better decisions.** Pilots who are allowed to nap in the cockpit make fewer judgment errors when taking off and landing than those who don't get a chance to do so.
- 2 Lift your spirits.** Lack of sleep makes you cranky, but napping increases the levels of serotonin, the feel-good hormone, in the brain.
- 3 Boost your creativity.** When you nap, your brain creates loose associations that help spawn fresh ideas.



HOT HAPPENINGS

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HOW MUCH From \$125

MORE INFO www.sing-jazz.com



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choreographers, Ricky Hu and Chen Wu-Kang.

WHEN March 20-29

WHERE Various locations

HOW MUCH Prices vary

MORE INFO www.nus.edu.sg/cfa/



DISNEY'S BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

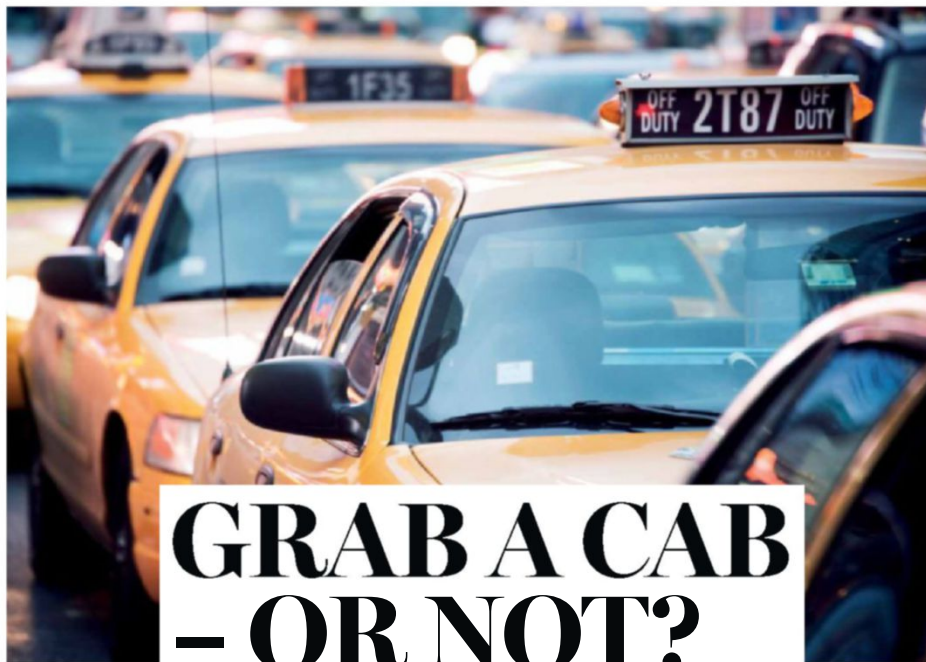
In Singapore for the first time, this Broadway production features award-winning songs and costumes.

WHEN March 21 to April 12

WHERE Marina Bay Sands

HOW MUCH From \$65

MORE INFO www.marinabaysands.com/entertainment.html



GRAB A CAB – OR NOT?

Make the most of your travel dollars by planning your itinerary well. That includes checking on airport-city transfers. Taking a taxi might actually be more time-saving and economical in some cities, but elsewhere, you save big bucks by hopping on a train or bus instead. According to www.hotels.com, **the worst places to cab from the airport to the city are Tokyo and London.**

The average fares can be as high as \$239 from Narita to downtown Tokyo, and \$136 from Heathrow to the city. To save time, you might consider getting a taxi in Bangkok or Taipei. Average airport transfers in these Asian cities cost \$10 and \$38 respectively – not so bad when split between two! (Note: Fares reflect November 2014 exchange rates as published in the report.)

Holiday hacks

TEAM SHAPE SHARES TOP TIPS TO MAKE THE MOST OF EVERY TRIP.

“When checking airfares and hotel prices, click on the privacy feature in your browser (Google’s is called Incognito). This prevents airlines and hotels from tracking how many times you’ve visited their sites – and stops them from hiking up prices.”

DAWN CHEN, WRITER



“Check to see if your trip coincides with a major festival or heritage event in the country, so you get to experience the culture while having fun.”

ESTELLE LOW, WRITER



“Always learn a bit of the local language before the trip for better communication with the locals. Phrases worth learning include greetings and places – like the toilet or exit.”

LANA NGUYEN, DESIGNER



“When shopping for cheap flights, be sure to check the transit duration. You don’t want to spend half a day on a stopover if you’re time-strapped.”

LEE YING YING, INTERN



“Take advantage of currency exchange differences when making your bookings online. Check the settings – many websites offer a choice of locations and/or currencies.”

LI YULING, EDITOR



BEFORE YOU GO...

If there’s one thing you should always bring along, it’s a pack of sanitary napkins. “Female travellers should pack a sufficient supply of tampons or sanitary napkins as gynaecological health can be affected when they travel overseas – the menstrual cycle may become irregular or even stop completely,” says Dr Winston Jong of EMA Global, a company that offers medical evacuation and repatriation services. They don’t take up much space, so there’s really no excuse not to pack them.

READER'S
POSTCARD



“Parasailing in Boracay in the Philippines was both exhilarating and nerve-wracking. The view of the Pacific Ocean from above was simply breathtaking.”

CHEE YING YING, 27, TEACHER



Ying Ying wins a Gregory J 23 Astral Red Backpack worth \$159. With features like a breathable back panel, shoulder harness, waist belt and female-friendly fit, it’s an ideal companion for backpacking and hiking. What’s more, it will keep you cool and comfortable. Do you have a travel picture and story to share? E-mail us at magshape@sph.com.sg with your name, age, occupation and daytime contact details.

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Live Healthy

ARM YOURSELF WITH KNOWLEDGE!

Stress less, weigh less

It's true. A tense day can not only lead to an ice cream pig-out, but the possibility that you'll store the results of that binge on your hips as well! Ohio State University researchers in the US found that **women who had the most stressors, like office tension or family drama, the day before eating a high-fat meal showed the highest levels of insulin – a hormone that helps your body store any extra calories as fat – half an hour after eating.** Plus, they burned 104 fewer calories in the six hours post-meal than those who had a less stressful day. That could add up to a 5kg weight gain over a year, says study co-author and dietitian Martha Belury. "Stress hormones, like epinephrine and cortisol, are a major determinant of how many calories you burn while resting. So, while you can't always avoid stressful events, you can manage them, like getting enough sleep and exercise, and trying calm-inducing therapies like yoga."



FIVE-SECOND RULE: FACT OR FICTION?

You're just about to eat a cookie when you drop it on the floor. You pick it up immediately – but is it still really safe to eat? Most likely yes, say researchers from Aston University in the UK, who measured the amount of bacteria pasta, toast and candy acquired from different surfaces.

*After three seconds of contact, barely any germs transferred from the floor to food in their study. **"Consuming something that's been dropped can never be risk-free, but our evidence suggests that the likelihood of being infected by eating food, especially dry things like toast, from an otherwise hygienic indoor flooring is very small,"** according to lead researcher Anthony Hilton.*

However, there are times when you may want to trash slippery morsels. Wet foods, like sauced pasta, pick up bacteria quickly, Anthony says. Also, anything dropped outdoors or in public spaces should be considered off-limits.



DOSE OF LAUGHTER

"You can only be in a bad mood for so long before you have to face up to the fact that it isn't a bad mood at all; it's just your sucky personality."

MEGAN MCCAFFERTY, AMERICAN AUTHOR

CAREGIVING'S REWARD

People who care for a chronically ill or disabled family member live an average of nine months longer than those who don't, according to a new study from the Johns Hopkins Center on Aging and Health in the US.

It also found that less than 17 per cent of caregivers reported high levels of related emotional strain. This contradicts the popular belief that people who take on the task of caregiving – particularly women responsible both for bringing up their own children and for the care of their ageing parents – are more likely to suffer stress-related health problems.

The upside seems to extend beyond the satisfaction of helping a loved one, says lead author David Roth, who hypothesises that feelings of gratitude and increased closeness with family also confer benefits. The healthiest, least frazzled caregivers may be those who take on their task willingly and have a solid support structure in place.

For guardians who feel stuck in their role – or whose "patients" can't or don't acknowledge their sacrifices (like parents with dementia, for example) – it's important to seek support. "Don't try to take it all on yourself," says David. "Be open to assistance from friends, relatives, or support groups that can ease your burden."



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Give your backyard a check-up

Your outdoor space may feel like an extension of your home, but even the most well-tended garden or deck can have potential health hazards. Use the following advice to stay safe.

Know the grill drill

To avoid charring more than the burgers, keep your grill away from anything flammable – including your home, leaves and shrubs. If you opt for gas, look for leaks by applying soapy water to the outside of the hose before each use. See any bubbles? It's time for a service check.

Watch your step

Falls are the leading cause of outdoor injuries across all age-groups, says Jeffrey Pellegrino, a member of the American Red Cross Scientific Advisory Council. Stay steady by attaching rubber treads to steps, angling sprinklers away from walkways, and clearing debris like fallen branches and leaves.

Danger-proof your deck

If you don't already have railings on every open side, have them built ASAP. At least once a year, inspect the bolts to see if they're secure. If your structure is wooden, apply a new coat of waterproof sealant to prevent warping as this can pull on fasteners.

Take pool precautions

The majority of child drowning accidents occur in family pools. To help prevent this, install a fence with a self-closing gate around your pool and make sure all dips are supervised.

Discourage skeeters

Mosquitoes love to breed in standing water, so don't let it accumulate. Use flowerpots with drainage slots and empty out all buckets when not in use. Say no to dengue!

...And ticks too

Overgrown grass is the perfect hideout for these critters, so keep your lawn no higher than ankle-deep. Ticks may carry viruses and bacteria that cause illnesses such as Lyme disease. **Q**

Make The Switch

Amalgam fillings can affect our health as they may contain mercury. Protect your long-term well-being and opt for composite fillings instead.

Amalgam fillings have been implicated as possible causes in a host of issues in our bodies, especially for individuals with metal or mercury sensitivities.

How healthy is your mouth?

Amalgam fillings are widely used to repair cavities caused by tooth decay. Strong and long-lasting, they have been used for many decades.

Most amalgam fillings contain about 50 per cent mercury. So, if you have a silver dental filling, chances are, it is made with amalgam.

Even though the International Academy of Oral Medicine and Toxicology has issued warnings about the dangers of mercury, most people are unaware of this health threat lurking in their mouths.

No to amalgam fillings

According to some studies, it is believed that the mercury in amalgam fillings is being released at very low levels as mercury vapour. This can be absorbed into the bloodstream and is stored in various areas and organs, notably the brain, kidney and liver.

On the flip side, there are also studies that show amalgam dental fillings have no ill effects on the body. These two bodies of studies have led to much debate for patients and dentists alike.

What we do know is that mercury dental fillings expand and contract due to changes in temperature. This has been attributed to an increase in tooth fractures and permanent damage of the tooth structure.

In addition, mercury silver fillings corrode over time in the harsh environment of the mouth, leaking metallic ions which cause staining and discolouration of the tooth. This makes it difficult for decay to be detected.



Often, the decay is left to worsen as there is usually little or no pain in early recurrent decay. Finally, pain occurs when the decay gets very close to the nerve of the tooth. Treatment often becomes complicated from that point onwards, most often than not requiring root canal treatment of the nerve and crowns.

Although more evidence is needed to support a total ban on amalgam fillings worldwide, many dentists are choosing to stop using them.

Orchard Scotts Dental (OSD), for one reveals has a strict protocol when

removing amalgam fillings. Mercury fillings are removed under high vacuum suction and tight isolation. This prevents the patient from ingesting the mercury fillings during their removal.

These mercury amalgam fillings can be replaced with new-generation composite (white) fillings that not only look good — they match the colour of your teeth to give a natural appearance — but also last just as long when done correctly. Large mercury fillings can be replaced with stronger ceramic or prefabricated resin for added strength and protection.

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You can also e-mail enquiry@orchardscottsdental.com or visit www.orchardscottsdental.com for more info.



A IS FOR AIKIDO

Our quick guide to getting started on this traditional Japanese martial art.

BY DEBORAH LIN PHOTOGRAPHY TAN WEI TE

Of the eight martial arts offered at Transcendence MMA, I pick aikido as it is supposedly the least aggressive.

A non-competitive sport, aikido's main principle is to facilitate self-defence and restrain the aggression of the attacker.

As with all martial arts, it engages the mind, body and soul, according to instructor Syed Ismail, whom we call sensei (teacher in Japanese). He emphasises the importance of staying focused in the face of an attack. No panicking!

"In aikido, movements are circular," he says. As Sensei Syed speaks, he executes

some seriously neat moves on Senior Syed Hud. Suddenly, Senior Hud lands on the ground with a loud thud. *Shape* editor Yuling and I raise our eyebrows and gulp.

"To subdue the attacker, you must redirect his movements through joint locks, followed by throws or immobilisation," says Sensei Syed as he proceeds to demonstrate a wrist lock on me as the aggressor.

In a split second, I am on the ground, wincing as a piercing pain shoots up my arm from the wrist. My early notion that aikido moves will not hurt vanishes.

Aikido is graceful but formidable! Plus, there are so many concepts to grasp. Here are some I picked up.



Ai – Union or harmony

Made up of three characters: *Ai* (meaning union or harmony in Japanese), *ki* (spirit) and *do* (technique), aikido is “the way of harmony of the spirit”. Practitioners are referred to as *aikidoka*.

While some martial arts focus on tackling or striking the *uke* (attacker), the emphasis in aikido is on the *nage* (defender) to leverage his own energy to gain control or redirect the movements of the *uke*. *Aikidoka* also gain mastery of *ukemi* (the act of receiving a technique and breaking a fall) as they progress.

Irimi Tenkan – A key move that translates to “entering turn”

In aikido, moves may be classified as positive (executed towards the attacker's front) or negative (towards his back).

The *irimi tenkan* is a positive move, and comprises fundamental footwork for the defender to diffuse the attacking force of the *uke*. It is followed by joint locks or throws.

Kyu – A series of grades within aikido

Starting with white belts, *aikidoka* achieve progressive grades (*kyu*) that go up to black belts with and without gold tips (gold indicates a higher rank).

Seniors can then pursue formal grading, with up to 10 degrees (*dan*) of advanced proficiency, to earn the title of *yudansha* – a martial artist who has achieved a *dan* level – and wear black belts with traditional trousers of the same hue, called *hakama*.

Sensei Syed is a yondan, or fourth dan *aikidoka*, while Hud is a shodan or first dan *aikidoka*.

Ikkyo – First technique

This is one of five main basic locks in aikido. The second, third, fourth and fifth techniques are referred to as *nikyo*, *sankyo*, *yonyko* and *gokyo* respectively.

In *ikkyo*, the *nage* controls one hand on the *uke*'s elbow and the other near his wrist to leverage the *uke* to the ground.

Dojo – Where practitioners train

Commonly referred to as a training ground, the *dojo* actually refers to any space where people can practise a martial art.

There is a *ki* to it, too. American author and aikido coach Richard Strozzi Heckler says: “The *dojo* is a place where we awaken our body, grow the self, unite with the spirit.”

Onegai Shimasu – An honorific used to request guidance from the sensei

Honorifics underline a key element of aikido: respect. At the start and close of the class, we kneel and bow to Sensei Syed. Before we begin, we request for his guidance (*onegai shimasu*). At the end, we express gratitude with a formal thank you (*arigatou gozaimasu*).

From beginning to end, there is a sense of sacredness within the *dojo* as we line up according to rank. Some might find this ceremonial element dated, but it's humbling and shows the level of respect one gives to both seniors and peers.

REPORT CARD

FIT FACTOR: 7/10

Aikido is intended for all ages; Sensei Syed has taught students aged four to 70. Expect to be conditioned. The warm ups include push-ups on your fists! I worked up quite a sweat – and not just because of the thick uniform. Perfecting the swift actions took multiple tries.

FUN FACTOR: 7/10

While it wasn't easy keeping up with all the techniques, it felt great to finally take down the *uke* after several failed attempts. Instead of pushing Senior Hud's jaw up during one move, I ended up jabbing him in the neck!

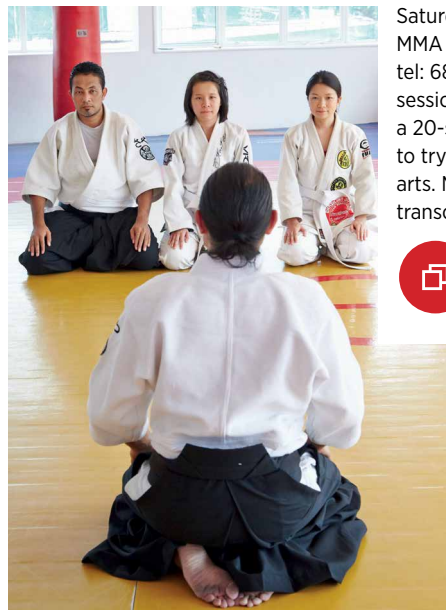
FEAR FACTOR: 6/10

It was quite a spectacle as the two seniors demonstrated the moves unreservedly, complete with grunts and loud thuds. Slightly overwhelming, but I also liked the idea that I could acquire the skill to overcome a bigger, more powerful attacker.

WHERE TO LEARN: Trial classes are available on Saturdays at Transcendence MMA (294A Lavender Street, tel: 6842-2337). Each two-hour session is \$20. Or sign up for a 20-session package at \$360 to try out a variety of martial arts. More details on www.transcendencemma.com. 



TAP FOR
GALLERY





RIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE

ENJOY EVERY PART OF YOUR MONTHLY
CYCLE. WE SHOW YOU HOW.

BY DAWN CHEN



Most of us get bummed out when Aunt Flo visits. That sticky, icky feeling, cramps, mood swings... the list goes on. But it's not all bad – the hormonal cycle has its ups, too. Research shows that different phases offer benefits such as a creativity boost and even an increase in your metabolism, which is the rate at which your body burns calories.

Besides triggering ovulation (the release of one or more matured eggs by the ovaries), and the thickening and breaking down of the lining of the womb, the various hormones that regulate your period can also have effects on your mood as well as mental function.

Days 1 to 5: Seeing red

Phew, the worst of the crankiness is over and premenstrual syndrome (PMS) should subside. “During the early part of your menstrual cycle, the three main hormones that control it – oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone – are all at a low,” says Dr Christopher Chong, consultant obstetrician, gynaecologist and urogynaecologist from Chris Chong Women & Urogynae Clinic.

The drop in hormone levels may explain your tiredness and low sex drive (sorry, honey, not tonight). Many women also get cramps, no thanks to naturally occurring chemicals known as prostaglandins, which trigger contractions in the uterus to facilitate the shedding of the menstrual lining.

Dr Chong recommends relaxing activities like taking a walk to break out of your mood rut or yoga. However, you might want to avoid inverted poses, like the Headstand or the Plow, when your flow is heavy. While not enough research has been done to confirm the link, some experts think inversions could lead to endometriosis that causes tissue that usually lines the uterus to grow outside it.

Days 6 to 14: Oh joy!

Feel-good days are here. Your oestrogen level rises as your body prepares itself to get pregnant, and this also ups the concentration of feel-good brain chemicals like serotonin and dopamine. Testosterone production is amped up during this time as well. “This is when you'll have renewed energy and a heightened sex drive,” adds Dr Chong.

As you approach ovulation, the surge in hormones will also make you feel more attractive, says Dr Tan Thiam Chye, a consultant obstetrician and gynaecologist on *Shape*'s advisory board. You might

subconsciously start wearing more makeup or flirty dresses too.

In a study published in the journal *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 88 women were asked to draw pictures of outfits they planned to wear to a hypothetical party. Women in the fertile phase of their cycles were likelier to draw sexier, more revealing outfits – even when they were already in happy, long-term relationships. The authors speculate that committed women were “inclined to increase their attractiveness in order to remain competitive with members of the opposite sex for their mates' attention”.

Your partner may be more drawn to you as well. According to research published in the journal *Hormones and Behavior*, men are more attracted to women at this time of the month. Other studies show that they find a woman's dance moves, as well as her voice and smell, more attractive in the days leading up to ovulation, says Dr Tan.

Oestrogen also improves your mental function. A study published in the journal *Psychological Medicine* found that women in the mid-follicular phase (around days six to 10) of their cycles were more verbally fluent than those in the late luteal phase (around days 16 to 28). “It's a good time of the month to schedule your important assignments and presentations,” adds Dr Chong.

Days 15 to 20: Baby ready

In an average 28-day cycle, a woman's fertile window lasts about six days. “Ovulation is when a woman tends to feel her best,” says Dr Tan. A small-scale study published in the journal *Psychoneuroendocrinology* also revealed that women get a creativity boost around ovulation. Plan your craft, writing or photography projects around this time. ►



However, while you're milking those positive vibes, be careful when playing sports. "Due to the surge in female hormones, ligaments are more lax during the ovulatory phase," says Dr Tan. "Sports injuries are more common then."

Research from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center in the US has also shown that women are nearly three times more likely to injure their anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) during ovulation than other times of their cycle.

During this phase, don't be alarmed if you find yourself sneaking more glances at a buff colleague too. It's totally normal as women tend to be attracted to manly types during ovulation, say scientists from the University of California, Los Angeles in the US. Researcher Martie Haselton suggests gravitating towards masculinity could be a lingering trait from female ancestors who equated stronger guys with better offspring survival. The feeling will pass once you're out of your fertile window.

Another upside: If you've been trying to break the habit, now's also the best time to quit smoking. Researchers from the University of Montreal in Canada have found that it may be easier to overcome withdrawal symptoms now than at the start of your cycle. Cravings and urges are less intense, thanks to your elevated oestrogen and progesterone levels.

Days 21 to 28: Cranky pants

When your body gets ready to eject the unfertilised egg, oestrogen and progesterone levels plunge, along with your mood, says Dr Chong.

Enter premenstrual syndrome (PMS), cheekily defined by www.urbandictionary.com as "a powerful spell women are put under about once every month, which gives them the strength of an ox, the stability of a Window's OS, and the scream of a banshee".

Anyone who has experienced the crazy mood swings, perpetual lethargy and backaches days before their period can testify that PMS is real. Though its exact cause is unclear, hormonal changes are a likely factor.

In fact, many women tend to feel their worst during the premenstrual period, says Dr Tan. "They may have food cravings, experience emotional depression and irritability, suffer from pimple outbreaks and become bloated because of fluid retention." With a list like that, anyone's bound to feel crappy.

There is still good news though: Your body torches more calories during this time. A study published in *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* found that in the days leading up to your next bleed, your basal metabolic rate increases by about nine per cent. **S**



WHEN SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT

Some months, your hormones are more merciless and you end up suffering throughout your cycle. While the occasional bad period is normal, here are signs you shouldn't ignore. If you experience any of the following, play it safe and book an appointment with your gynae.

● TOO MUCH FLOW

An easy way to tell if your bleeding is too heavy is to count the number of pads or tampons you go through each day. According to the Singapore Health Promotion Board, you could be suffering from a condition known as menorrhagia if you soak through one or more pads every hour.

Other symptoms of the condition include periods that last past seven days, as well as the passing out of large blood clots. Excessive and prolonged bleeding can lead to anaemia and cause fatigue, pallor and shortness of breath.

● SPOTTING REGULARLY

If you notice bleeding apart from your normal periods, it could be a sign

that something's wrong. It's a cause for concern if it's accompanied by other symptoms like dizziness and pain, or if the bleeding is very heavy. According to the US National Institutes of Health, causes of abnormal bleeding include fibroids, stress and worse, cancer.

● DEBILITATING PERIODS

While cramps are (unfortunately) normal, get help if your pain is severe and accompanied by a fever and sharp abdominal pains, or if you're passing out multiple blood clots or foul-smelling discharge, advises the UK National Health Service. These symptoms hint at a more serious underlying medical condition like endometriosis.



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THE REST OF THE WORLD

*WHY WOMEN IN OTHER COUNTRIES SLEEP DEEPER
AND LONGER THAN WE DO – AND HOW YOU CAN
FOLLOW THEIR SNOOZE CUES.*

One night you're staring at the ceiling for an hour, willing your eyelids to feel heavy. The next, you conk out immediately – only to wake up and see the numbers 04:00 glowing on your alarm clock. Sound familiar?

But not all members of the fairer sex wage this battle: In its most recent international poll, the US National Sleep Foundation (NSF) found that our counterparts in Mexico, Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada doze regularly – and with relative ease.

We looked at the data and consulted experts to find out what foreigners are doing differently and why it works. Read on and slumber soundly (at last!).



United Kingdom

We might poke fun at the Brits' tea habit, but 43 per cent of the population consume a heated beverage before crawling under the covers – and they average 18 more minutes of sleep nightly than the Americans.

New York City sleep specialist Dr Allen Towfigh acknowledges that while the comforting nature of toasty drinks may play a role, a deeper biological mechanism could also be at work.

“An animal study showed that warming a part of the brain called the preoptic anterior hypothalamus induces sleep, and this part of a human brain sits close to the roof of the mouth,” says Dr Towfigh. “Warm beverages may trigger receptors in the region and set off a chemical cascade that promotes sleep.”

To try this strategy, stick to one cup of chamomile or another non-cafeinated drink half an hour before bedtime, says Dr Towfigh. And there's no need to finish the entire cup: “You don't want to wake up to go to the bathroom because you drank too much tea,” says Russell Rosenberg, an investigator at Neurotrials Research and member of the NSF's expert poll panel.

Not into hot sips? You could also sleep in the buff, which 30 per cent of English respondents credit for their stellar shuteye. (And you thought those Brits were buttoned-up!) “This idea has yet to be scientifically studied, but the increased comfort associated with being naked may help,” says Dr Towfigh. And if it keeps you up with your delighted partner, nothing wrong with that!

Mexico

You might think of India when you hear the word meditate, but it's a common practice among Mexicans – 62 per cent engage in quiet reflection or prayer in the hour before sleep, the NSF survey reveals. It's a custom that other nationalities don't follow nearly enough, according to Russell.

“We know how important it is to take a moment at the end of the day to unwind,” says Russell. “It helps prevent us from bringing the weight of the current day – or the next day – to bed with us.”

The optimal time to pray or meditate is 30 minutes before hitting the mattress, so you don't rush the process. Choose a location away from your bed to prevent yourself from subconsciously connecting it with the topics you're contemplating, Russell says. He adds that what you mull over is important too.

“Focus on being thankful rather than on the resolution of problems,” says Russell. “For example, praying for someone to recover from an illness or for insight into a problem is unlikely to calm you.” Weighty matters can pull you down a rabbit hole that only leads to *Insomnia Central*, so save pondering them for waking hours.

Come morning, do your mum proud and make the bed. Eighty-two per cent of Mexicans report practising the habit daily and changing the sheets more than once a week, which could contribute to the additional minutes of snoozing that they log. Turning down the covers or putting on new linens may promote a more relaxing environment needed to catch more sleep, says Dr Towfigh. ►



THREE SURPRISING SLEEP SABOTEURS

Look around your bedroom – one of these mainstays could be what's keeping you from your date with Mr Sandman.

YOUR PILLOWS

Can't get comfy, no matter which type you try? Ten per cent of sound snoozers in Mexico sleep without a pillow under their heads.

YOUR OPAQUE WINDOW COVERINGS

Contrary to what you might think, blackout curtains and darkening shades could be messing with your sleep.

More than a third of respondents in Germany and Mexico go to bed with their shades or blinds open. Russell Rosenberg, director of research and investigator at Neurotrials Research, says this could help maintain the body's natural circadian rhythm.

YOUR CLOCK

You know what time the alarm is set for, so there's no good reason to have the numbers positioned towards you, says Russell. Turning the device around prevents you from fixating on the hour when you're trying to snooze.

Germany

An astounding 90 per cent of Germans say it's the pleasant aroma of their bedroom, which they air out once a week, that helps lull them to sleep.

"Scent plays a powerful role in relaxation and memory-building," says David Cloud, CEO of the NSF. But there's no one-smell-fits-all sleep solver, according to Russell. "Scent is tied to emotion, and that's very personal," he says. "Fragrances that help you feel calm without overpowering your room are best."

Interestingly, lavender and jasmine essences – frequently touted for their calming properties – were least popular.

Whatever scent makes you drowsy, send it into the air with reed diffusers, potpourri, sachets and other non-electric aromatic tools (anything that might burn won't increase your peace of mind). Keep the smell limited to your bedroom to enhance its power; you'll subconsciously equate one whiff of it with dozing off.

Canada

Canada came in No. 1 as well-rested champs, with 84 per cent of residents saying they fall asleep quickly at least a few evenings a week.

Part of their success seems to lie in temperature regulation. Half of Canadians take a bath before bed, a warming move that induces a temperature drop that eventually triggers sleep.

The key is to keep the water below 40 deg C and time your dip for an hour or two before you hit the sack. Other researchers have found a connection between cold feet and difficulty nodding off – not a problem for the one in five Canadians who wear socks to bed (the most among all countries in the poll).

So, catching 40 winks could come down to sleeping in your birthday suit and fuzzy socks? It might look silly, but you'll be too busy dreaming to care. ■

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THAT'S THE SPIRIT

These SEA Games athletes come from different sporting disciplines, but have one thing in common: super mental strength.

#GoTeamSingapore!

BY LEE YING YING PHOTOGRAPHY BY WONG WEI LIANG

Presented by H&M

SASHA CHRISTIAN,
22, WAKEBOARDER

#FEARLESS

As the lanky 22-year-old walks into our office, heads turn. Maybe it's her striking neon wakeboard – or the fact that she looks so laid-back cool in her printed tee, knee-length board shorts and quirky watermelon-printed socks.

A true water baby, Sasha learnt to kneeboard when she was 18 months old. But being comfortable in water doesn't account for her success. Becoming Singapore's top female wakeboarder takes guts.

Sasha's really quite impressive to watch when she's in her element. One moment, she's gliding across the water like a pond skater, and the next, she's seamlessly executing trick after trick in mid-air.

The adrenaline rush is precisely what she thrives on: "Once I try out a trick, there's

always something more I want to learn," she says. "It's addictive."

An extreme sport, wakeboarding has left many athletes injured in its wake, and that includes Sasha. After spraining her medial collateral ligament (MCL), one of four major ligaments in the knee, in 2012, it took her seven long months to get back on the water again.

"I felt sorry for myself," she admits. "I put on weight until I got off my bum and did something about it." One good thing that came out of the accident: Sasha started doing yoga, and the dynamic stretches have actually helped her perform even better at wakeboarding.

So what does this daredevil do when she makes a mistake in a competition? Not one to wallow in self-bashing,

she says, "When I fall during a competition, I simply get back up again."

Scary as it can sometimes seem, Sasha gets a sense of satisfaction like no other when she nails her favourite Air Raley trick, which has her body parallel to the water's surface during a jump!

Despite the risks involved in every trick, Sasha's passion for wakeboarding burns brighter than her fear. She says philosophically: "Anything you do in life isn't safe – even crossing the road. It's really a matter of perspective."

It's no wonder then that her other interest is action sports photography. Takes one to know one!



"MISTAKES IN A COMPETITION WILL
NOT DEFINE ME AS A WAKEBOARDER."

Sasha wears

Tank top, \$24.90,
pullover, \$49.90,
leggings, \$39.90,
bangle, \$5.90,
necklace, \$12.90, rings,
\$9.90 for a set, and
shoes, \$49.90,
from H&M.

#DISCIPLINE

LIM XIANG QI AMANDA,
22, SWIMMER

She's dubbed the "Sprint Queen" by local media, and it's a title Amanda has strived hard to earn. The 2015 SEA Games will be the swimmer's fifth – and she's so seasoned and determined, her coach trusts her to follow her training schedule without reminders.

With 10 training sessions and three gym sessions weekly, Friday for Amanda is a restful evening instead of a wild night out in town. "It's not that I'm not allowed to go out and have fun, but I simply don't have the energy for it."

Her days at Singapore Sports School have taught her to plan and prioritise. For this elite athlete, swimming tops the list. Everything else can wait, including her dream to get into medical school. "I don't regret it at all. Others don't have the kind of experiences I have," she says with much resolve.

Given her investment in the sport, one can imagine her disappointment when she failed to qualify for the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. "I was so devastated that I nearly quit," Amanda says. "If I were 0.2 seconds faster, perhaps there would have been a chance."

But the stubborn little voice in her head kept telling her: "You've already come so far, why not just swim for a few more years, and then try again?" She then picked herself up, and went on to win three gold medals, as well as set a new meet record at the 2013 SEA Games.

Beyond her achievements, Amanda's enviably lean and toned figure bears testament to her tenacity. Just don't ask her for shortcuts – there are none. "Swim 10 times a week with me and you'll get the same figure."



"IF IT IS MEANT TO BE,
IT IS UP TO ME."

Amanda wears

Sports bra, \$39.90, sweater, \$29.90, leggings, \$49.90, necklace, \$12.90, rings, \$5.90 for a set, and necklace (worn as bracelet), \$9.90, from H&M.

Premila wears
Sports bra, \$39.90,
jacket, \$79.90, skirt,
\$49.90, earrings,
\$14.90, rings, \$3.90
and \$9.90 per set,
and wedges, \$59.90,
from H&M.

"I AM THE MASTER OF MY FATE
AND THE CAPTAIN OF MY SOUL."
INVICTUS BY WILLIAM ERNEST HENRY

#PASSION

PREMILA HIRUBALAN,
32, NETBALLER

At 1.7m tall, Premila looks every bit the part of a goal defender. Plus, the veteran netballer has the amazingly shapely shoulders and arms many women would kill for. "Call me Prem," she says with a firm handshake.

Ask why she loves netball, and she will tell you it's not about the game – or the body-sculpting benefits. "It's the bonds forged within the team," she says. Her dedication is so strong that a 24-hour day at work – Prem is a doctor by profession – doesn't stop her from training with her teammates.

Where does she get all that energy from? She says that netball training helps her de-stress. "I frown on my way to training, glare at everyone, and then I feel good the moment I meet my mates at the gym," she says jokingly.

Since she started representing Singapore in 1999, she has left and rejoined the national team thrice. After getting her degree in biomedical science, she returned from Australia

to compete in the 2007 World Netball Championships, rekindling her fervour for netball. Eager to excel, she also competed in the World Championships again four years later.

Prem admits it's tough juggling a demanding full-time job, exercise and weekend training sessions. But the support she receives from family, friends and even strangers stokes her fire. Once, a stranger approached her to thank her for "giving so much to the country". Those were his exact words, she says.

Another time, she was on the way to work when a security guard stopped her. He asked why she wasn't wearing her jersey that day – after watching the finals of Mission Foods Asian Netball Championships the night before.

For this year's SEA Games, Prem is going all out for the gold medal. "To be able to win the first gold for netball and on home ground. I can't describe how much it would mean for everyone."

FOCUS

NG LIN ZHI SHAYNA,
25, BOWLER

To get the ball rolling (no pun intended) in the interview, we ask Shayna if there's any misconception about the sport that she'd like to correct. It's a good question because she responds immediately: "That bowling is not a sport!"

Compared to athletics and other aerobic exercises, bowling is less physically challenging, Shayna concedes. "If a runner or swimmer and I were to compare 2.4km times, I'd obviously be slower."

But competitive bowlers like Shayna have a mental stamina that easily rivals that of marathoners. Scoring multiple strikes demands absolute concentration. Endurance matters also, as bowling tournaments can go on for ages.

At the 45th Brunswick Ballmaster Open in Europe earlier this year, Shayna bowled for 11 hours non-stop, as she advanced from one round to the next. "I couldn't feel my fingers afterwards," the 25-year-old says.

In a close fight, winning is truly a battle of grit. The last to crack under pressure prevails. Crowned champion at the AMF Bowling World

Cup in 2012, Shayna's climb to the top has not been easy. Although she joined the national team at 17, Shayna was transferred to the youth team the following year. She attributes this to youthful complacency and lack of focus: "When they sent me for world-class tournaments, I couldn't perform up to the national standard."

The lowest point in her life, the humbling experience taught her a lesson. "After I was done being angry with everyone around me, I trained like crazy," she says.

It took Shayna two years of hard work to rejoin the national team. When she wasn't in school, she was at the bowling alley, training for hours on end. She also started giving herself mental pep talks. Each competitor has spare moments before his or her next turn, and Shayna believes that feeding her mind with positive thoughts during this time helps. After a bad throw, like failing to aim the ball accurately, she refuses to let herself be affected. She tells herself: "Let it go and refocus."

One thing's for sure: Shayna's not taking her second chance lightly.

"I WILL BE BOWLING FOR AS LONG AS I HAVE
THE ABILITY TO WIN FOR SINGAPORE BECAUSE
I AM DOING SOMETHING THAT I LOVE."



Shayna wears

Long-sleeved top, \$69.90,
turtleneck top, \$39.90, vest,
\$69.90, track pants, \$49.90,
bangle, \$9.90, and boots,
\$59.90, from H&M.

"FATE AWAITS YOU WITH A
BEAUTIFUL PLAN AHEAD."

LYRIC FROM A SONG BY KOREAN BOY BAND, EXO.

Daphne wears

Long-sleeved top,
\$39.90, dress, \$24.90,
harness, \$14.90, leggings,
\$19.90, rings, \$5.90 and
\$9.90 per set, and flats,
\$19.90, from H&M.

HAIR: MARIE SOU USING BENEFIT/WWW.MARIESOU.COM MAKEUP: LEON LOKE / LE DESTINEE

#POSITIVITY

DAPHNE THERESA CHIA,
18, RHYTHMIC GYMNAST

Slender and effortlessly graceful, Daphne was talent-spotted at age nine. "I didn't choose rhythmic gymnastics. It chose me," she says when we ask why she picked the sport. The school's rhythmic gymnastics coach encouraged her to join the team after observing her during physical education (PE) class.

At 18, Daphne has a daily schedule that'd put most of us to shame. Unlike other teenagers with the luxury of after-school time to hang out and follow Korean drama serials, every minute of this national athlete's life is packed: Wake up at 5am, lectures, tutorials, four-hour training sessions, meals on the go, assignments, and, finally, bedtime at 1am. "I see my coach more than I see my parents!"

We give her a sympathetic look, but Daphne smiles and shrugs. She's not one to indulge in self-pity. In fact, her ability to see the bright side of things and make the most of what she's got is precisely what's kept her going for the past decade.

Did she ever consider giving up? Yes.

A year after joining the school team, Daphne almost broke under the pressure of the training. But her PE teacher spurred her on. "She told me to take heart. If the coach scolds me, it means I have room for improvement and I am worth the trouble." She also learnt to see the silver lining of her personal dark cloud, and now applies a positive attitude to every other aspect of her life.

"Hard work doesn't guarantee success in what you originally thought you would excel in, but making the best out of it is a success in itself already," she tells us. Of course, the Raffles Junior College graduate is by no means an underachiever. At press time, Daphne got a conditional offer to study medicine at the University of Cambridge.

Her success is very well deserved. She has sacrificed sleep, family time, friendships, and her beloved chocolates. You'd think nothing could ever break this girl's discipline, but she lets on with a naughty grin: "Oh, I love durians, but don't tell my coach!" 🍌

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Get Fit

SCULPT YOUR BEST BODY EVER!

Steady as you go

Preparing for a long-distance event? Take it easy. **Athletes who primarily trained for an Ironman Triathlon at a low intensity moved faster on race day than those who did more of their workouts at a moderate level**, according to a new study in the *International Journal of Sports Physiology and Performance*. To get the benefits, researchers suggest sticking with an easy pace during 70 per cent of your sessions. You've hit the right stride if you can chat as you move. When you can only utter a word or two, slow down.



Mind the run

If you think your evening run feels harder, it actually is. Mental fatigue from a stressful day of work can negatively impact your running pace, say researchers from the American College of Sports Medicine. They found that the more mentally lethargic exercisers felt, the lower their VO2 levels were. These measure the volume of oxygen the body uses to convert energy from the food you eat into energy molecules for use at the cellular level.

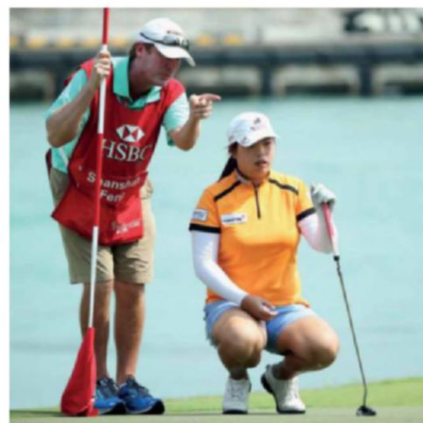
A high VO2 is associated with better cardiovascular fitness and aerobic power (and therefore performance). Researchers aren't sure exactly why this happens, but now you know your mental state can affect your run. So if you've had a bad day, take it easy and don't worry if you're slower than usual.



**“Either you run the day
or the day runs you.”**

JIM ROHN, AMERICAN ENTREPRENEUR,
AUTHOR AND MOTIVATIONAL SPEAKER

HOT HAPPENINGS



● 2015 HSBC WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS

Watch the world's top six female golfers, including defending champion Paula Creamer, compete for a US\$1.4 million prize in this eighth edition.

WHEN March 5 to 8, from 8am daily

WHERE Serapong Course, Sentosa Golf Club

HOW MUCH From \$20

MORE INFO www.hsbcgolf.com/womens

● AVEDA WALK FOR WATER

Raise funds for clean water projects in developing nations by joining this 4.8km walk, which is the average distance women in developing countries tread each day to collect water for their families. The first 100 to sign up by March 10 will receive an Aveda travel-size shower kit.

WHEN April 12, 8.30am

WHERE MacRitchie Reservoir

HOW MUCH \$25 (adult); \$12 (child aged 12 and below); \$65 (family of two adults and two children under 12)

SO LIGHT

If you love the Skechers Gorun series, you will appreciate the new **Gorun 4** (\$179). Weighing just 147g (US size 7), it promises more agility than its predecessor. It also has a smooth, sleek construction, plus a stretchy toe box to accommodate foot expansion during a run. The additional cushioning at the midsole gives more comfort.





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A FRESH SPIN

BY MAVIS TEO

Instructor-led classes on a stationary bike are no longer just about cycling at intervals of varying resistance and speed as gyms get creative with hybrid workouts that more than sculpt your glutes.

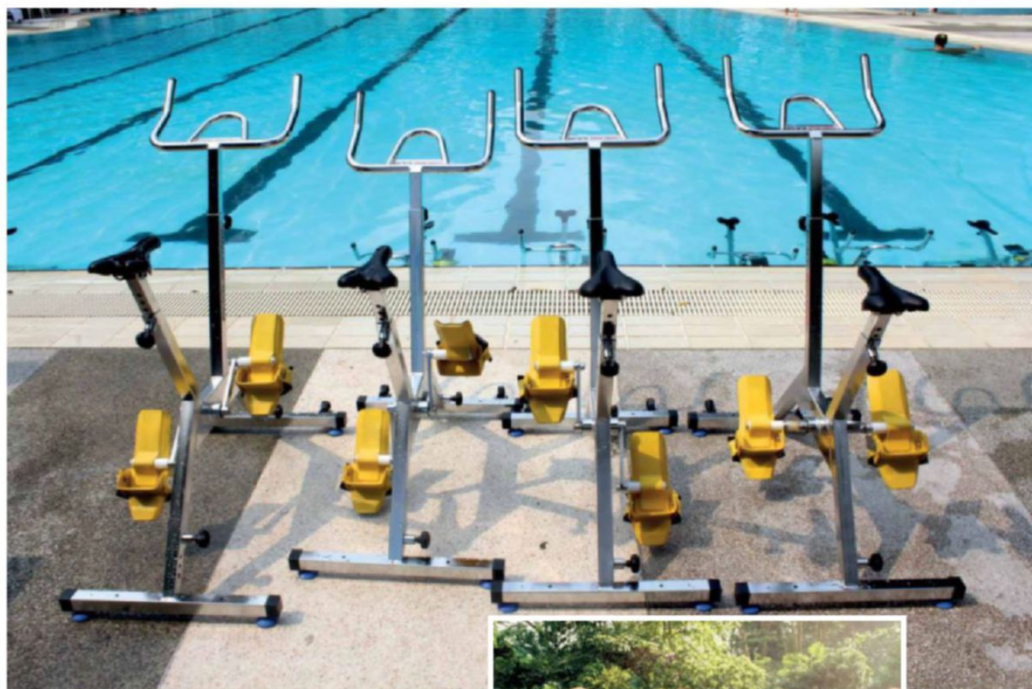
Increasingly popular with busy working adults, these fusion classes aim to burn fat more efficiently in a shorter duration, work the upper body harder in an exercise that traditionally focuses on the lower body, and even give a deeper stretch with the addition of yoga moves.

In less than a year, three spinning studios have opened (although one in the suburbs has since closed). Larger fitness centres have also revamped existing classes by introducing high intensity interval training (HITT) into choreography conceived by former professional cycling champions, with recovery stages between racing spurts to get heart and burn rates up.

While it's clear that hybrid classes offer cardio and sculpting moves for a more balanced workout for those with limited time to spare, the jury is still out on their efficacy.

You might get a bit of everything, but not enough of most things except a good cardio workout. Plus, they're not cheap – but working out for 35 to 50 minutes in a guided, motivating environment is definitely better than not at all.

Fitness studios are putting a twist on traditional spinning classes by incorporating other workouts.



Aqua Spin (www.aquaspin.sg)

Where Various country and community clubs islandwide. Proprietor Alicia Antonucci (tel: 9698-9202) is also available for private sessions. This year, Aqua Spin will have a permanent space in Tanderu, a clubhouse in Dempsey Hill.

The twist As simple as it looks, pedalling in water is much harder as it provides 10 times the resistance on land. You have to work harder to keep moving and engage your core at all times, so that the lightweight bike doesn't wobble much. The class is broken up into segments, alternating between spinning at different intensities of 50, 75 and 100 per cent effort, and working different body parts.

Average calorie burn 500kcal in 45 minutes

Intensity 2/5

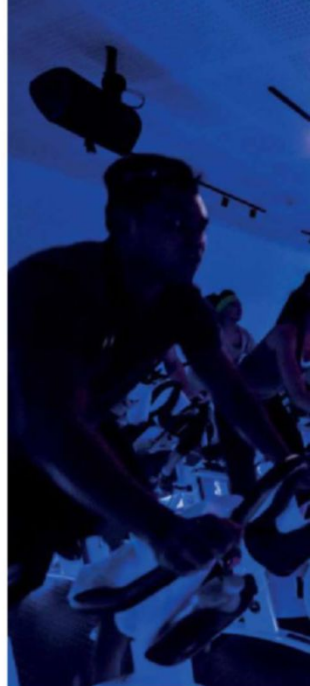


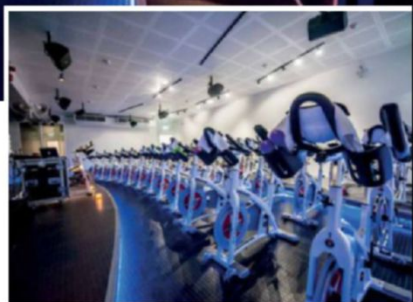
Upside Exercising in water is more pleasant than being in an enclosed studio.

Downside If you really push yourself during the 100 per cent intensity spurt, you'll find aqua spinning tiring. Also, you don't get the same adrenaline rush and sense of accomplishment that tends to come with feeling hot and bothered in the gym.

Post-workout Your thighs may look more toned the very next day.

Price \$40 per ad hoc class; \$20 for first trial.





Crucycle Pack Ride

(www.crucycle.com)

Where 8 Duxton Road (tel: 6509-8880)

The twist Top Los Angeles spinning instructor Siddiqi Ray has designed a workout which combines dynamic jumps, upper body moves with free weights, dance moves, resistance training and even yoga at the end. Unlike a traditional spinning class, there are a lot of pulses and push offs from the handles to get your heart rate up very quickly.

Average calorie burn 400-500kcal in 50 minutes

Intensity 3/5

Upside Time flies and you end the session with yoga poses such as the Pigeon with alternate legs stretched on the bike frame. It helps stretch the hips and legs, and feels great after you've been cooped up in the office all day.

Downside Trying to catch up with the fast pulses, push-ups and upper body movements can be overwhelming for newbies still grappling with the foot pedals. Sign up for a beginner's class before trying this. Another thing: Unless you have a very stable core, you might find yourself engaging the muscles between your shoulder blades to keep your balance during the pulses and push-ups, which could cause strain.

Post-workout You will experience an extreme adrenaline rush that puts you on a high for the next few hours.

Price \$50 per ad hoc class; \$500 for 10.



Krank Fusion at Physique360

(www.physique360.com)

Where 383 Bukit Timah Road, #01-03/#01-06 (tel: 836-1300)

The twist The krankcycle looks like an upturned bike with hand pedals that power a suspended flywheel. Instead of foot pedals, you get on a low stand that is wide enough for you to do lunges. Caroline Teo, co-owner of Physique360, blends regular spinning with kranking, which focuses on the upper body to build cardio fitness. A spin bike is placed next to a krankcycle so you can shift from one machine to the other. By the end of the class, you'd have completed two full

sets with plyometric exercises like jumps and bodyweight exercises like push-ups, while alternating between spinning and kranking.

Average calorie burn 540-780 kcal in 60 minutes

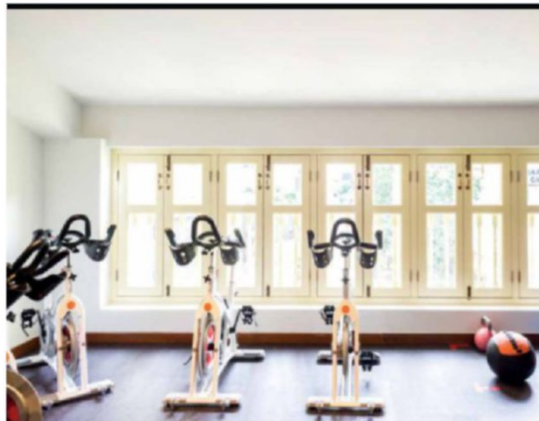
Intensity 2/5

Upside Once you get the hang of how the krankcycle's handles work, the class is easy to follow. You also build upper body strength and core stability, as well as burn calories.

Downside Caroline is the only Krank-certified trainer in her gym, and runs only one class of Krank Fusion on Wednesday evenings, and one Krank Bootcamp on Saturday mornings.

Post-workout You might feel soreness in the upper body muscles.

Price \$30 per class; \$280 for 10.



7Cycle Bootcamp

(www.7cycle.sg)

Where 27 Boon Tat Street (tel: 6222 8770)

The twist Designed by Nazrul Osman, a veteran personal trainer of 10 years and one of the studio's owners, the class is a fusion of circuit training and spinning, boot camp-style. The class is split into two groups. You alternate between a set of high intensity interval training (HITT) at different stations for a floor exercise, and cycling on the bike with recovery and sprint phases. The exercises during HITT change with every session and instructor. This means you'll never get bored, and your muscles are constantly challenged. If you need a heart rate monitor, just ask.

Average calorie burn 400kcal in 35 minutes

Intensity 4/5



Upside Enjoy the camaraderie in the shower room even among people who are meeting only for the first time as you'll all feel bonded after surviving a tough session.

Downside Even for the relatively fit, the fast routine takes some getting used to. Couch potatoes will find the short recovery periods too intense for them. Plus, with only 10 bikes set aside to free up room for the circuit exercises, it can be hard to get a spot during peak hours without advanced booking.

Post-workout Warning: You may feel more tired after this than two hours of back-to-back traditional spinning and body pump classes.

Price \$45 per ad hoc class; \$420 for 10; \$1,450 for 50. ■

Jump for a hot body

Torch 230 calories in 25 minutes with this fat-zapping routine.

The take-anywhere skipping rope can help you blast up to 13 calories a minute, tone major muscles, and improve your balance and coordination. "Plus, with a little creativity, you can work all your leg muscles by adding squats and lunges, and tone your shoulders and arms with moves like overhead swings," says Tim Haft, a US-based trainer. He created this total-body plan, which you can do at home, on the road, or in a hotel room to stay slim all year round.

YOUR WORKOUT PLAN

- **Workout intensity** Moderately hard
- **Total time** 25 minutes
- **Equipment needed** Skipping rope
- **Calories burned** 230 (based on 66kg woman)

TIME (MINS)	WHAT TO DO	RPE* (1-10)
0-2	Warm up: Jog in place for one minute, then do shoulder rolls for 30 seconds and heel raises for another 30 seconds.	3
2-4	Hold both rope handles in right hand and do arm circles to the side while doing walking lunges for one minute. Switch rope to left hand and repeat.	5-6
4-6	Jump rope at a moderate pace.	5-6
6-9	Jump rope at a moderate pace, doing small hops from side to side for 30 seconds, and then front to back for 30 seconds. Repeat twice.	6-7
9-10	Hop on one foot for 30 seconds, then switch and repeat.	8
10-12	Hold rope with both hands and swing it in front of you in a full figure-eight motion three times. Then do a squat and repeat.	5-6
12-14	Hold both handles of rope in right hand and lasso it over head while you jog in place for one minute. Switch hands and repeat.	6
14-15	Do lateral speed skater jumps (see right).	7
15-22	Repeat minutes 2-9.	5-7
22-23	RJump rope as fast as you can.	9
23-25	Cool down: March in place.	3

*Rate of perceived exertion. See www.shape.com.sg/rpe for details.



To ensure your rope is the right length, stand on its centre and pull the rope up until taut. The ends should be 2cm to 3cm below your shoulders.



POWERMOVE

Tone your lower body and improve your rope skills with lateral speed skater jumps.

• Extend rope on the floor so it's parallel to you. Stand to the right of rope with feet hip-width apart and arms at sides. Squat, lift left foot, and push off with right leg to hop over rope while staying low. Land on left leg, bring right foot behind left diagonally, while swinging your arms backwards.

Then immediately push off on left leg to jump over rope, landing on right foot. Continue alternating sides as quickly as you can with good form.

TEXT: MALLORY CREVELING/PHOTO: CHRIS FANNING HAIR: MARY GUTHRIE/ABTP.COM MAKEUP: ELAINE MADELO/EXCLUSIVE ARTISTS

STEP RIGHT UP

This simple functional exercise will keep you steady in those stilettos.

Trying to take a phone call with your hands full, while trotting down the stairs in high heels? You don't have to be a tightrope walker to achieve that kind of balance. True Fitness master trainer Wendy Cho recommends this functional exercise that will improve your stability.

DUMBBELL STEP UPS

THE PLAN

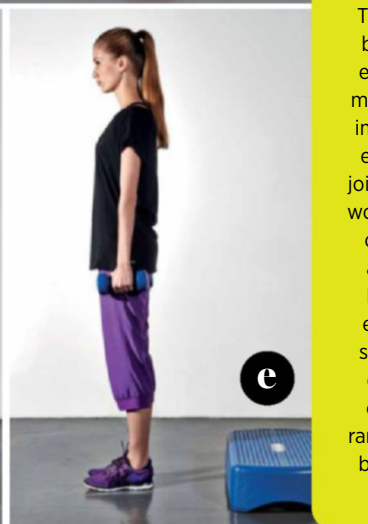
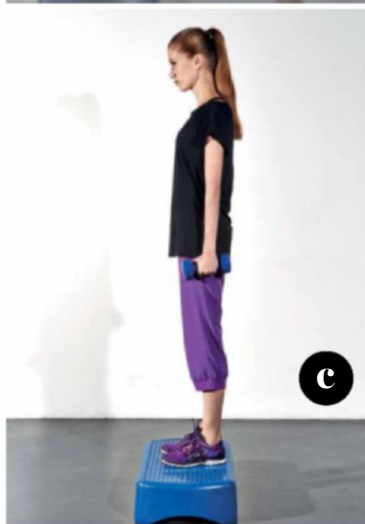
How it works

Twice a week, do three to five sets of 12 reps. Rest for 15 seconds between each set.

You'll need

A pair of 3kg to 5kg dumbbells and a step board or a low, stable stool.

● Holding dumbbells in hands, stand with feet shoulder-width apart. Keep back straight [a]. Step up onto step board or stool with left foot [b], then right [c]. Step off with left foot [d]. Keeping left knee slightly bent, bring right foot off step [e]. Return to [a] and repeat on right side (starting with right foot) to complete one rep.



WHAT'S FUNCTIONAL TRAINING?

This conditions our bodies to perform everyday activities more efficiently, and includes compound exercises, or multi-joint movements that work several muscles or muscle groups at the same time. Not only do such exercises improve strength, they also enhance stability, coordination and range of motion. You become less prone to injury too.

Refresh your workout

*So long, downward dog.
Later, leg extensions.
We've stepped up three
common routines by
giving you nine new ways
to sculpt fast and have
more fun.*

BY JANET LEE PHOTOGRAPHY NIKOLAUS JUNG

a

What's the No. 1 killer of workout results? Boredom – also known as the dreaded plateau, where your muscles are yawning, even if you aren't! We've all been there: At first, you're excited to show up as you've started seeing your body change. Then, one day, you can't motivate yourself to pick up that weight, take yoga, or do another crunch. Any good trainer will tell you that you have to keep changing it up or your attention-challenged muscles will start dozing off in class. To inspire a little kick-in-the-pants action, we asked three top trainers to breathe new life into yoga, core and strength routines. With fun gear (some you've probably seen, while others may be new) and creative moves that will firm you up all over, your brain and body will be psyched to hit the gym again.

THE PLAN

How it works

Add some of these moves to your routines, or put all nine exercises together for a super-sculpting bonanza.

You'll need

Various tools (specified throughout). Most gyms have everything you'll see here, but many pieces are inexpensive and available at sporting goods stores. If not, create your own version at home.

b

THE REDO

Yoga

We know, we know: You're not supposed to get bored in yoga class. There's always a way to improve your form and advance the postures. Still, a girl needs to have a little fun. Combining two body definers, like yoga and pilates, is one way to do it. Adding gear is another. These tools engage your core muscles, so you bonus-tone your abs every time you use them.

OPTION #1

Clubbell Yoga (from \$60; www.tacfitsingapore.com)

"Using a weighted club or clubbell (opposite) in yoga engages your shoulder and core muscles more," says Summer Huntington, a US-based yoga instructor who created Clubbell Yoga. "The clubs help you find proper alignment. Once you take them away, you'll notice your form has improved dramatically."

SCANDASANA

Works leg, butt, shoulders and core

Stand with feet wide apart and hold narrow end of clubbell with both hands in front of abs, elbows bent **[a]**. Shift weight to right leg as you pivot on left heel and extend arms forward at chest height, lowering into deep lunge on right leg **[b]**. Go as low as you can while keeping heel on ground. The more you do it, the lower you'll be able to get. Hold for 45 seconds, then switch to other side and repeat.



OPTION #2

Yoga with a suspension trainer (\$99; www.trxsingapore.com) “Being suspended requires you to use all your core muscles at once,” says Summer. “Plus, it will boost your endurance and help you maintain good form.”

SUSPENDED KNEE TO ELBOW

Works shoulders, chest and core

Anchor suspension trainer high over firmly closed door or overhead bar with single handle strap hanging low. Get into plank position on floor with hands under shoulders. Place right foot in handle strap and raise left leg to meet right so body is straight from head to heels. Tighten abs and tuck pelvis under slightly to protect lower back **[a]**. Keeping right leg straight, draw left knee to touch left elbow **[b]**. Return to starting position and repeat for 45 seconds. Switch sides and repeat. To switch sides, place both feet in handle strap, then take right foot out.





OPTION #3

Yogalates “It combines the alignment of yoga with the intense core work of pilates to help you find better positioning in both,” says Summer. By focusing more on pelvic and spine stability, you’ll be able to become stronger from deep within your core, making any pose feel easier.

HOLLOW BODY CRUNCH

Works core

Lie face up with arms extended behind you, palms facing up, legs straight and toes pointed. Pull belly button towards spine and think of pressing rib cage down

into floor as you raise arms off floor, lift legs and bend knees **[a]**. Crunch abs to lift head, shoulders and upper back, keeping arms next to ears and pulling knees in slightly **[b]**. Slowly lower and repeat for 90 seconds. Make sure lower back stays on floor the entire time.



THE REDO

Core workouts

If you've ever crunched your way through an abs class, you know how many moves you can throw at your core in one session. Those multilayered muscles are workhorses – and powerhouses. Still, how often do you just resort to banging out a set of bicycles at the end of a workout and calling it a day? These three tools will help you flatten and firm your middle in an entirely new way.



a

OPTION #1

TRX Rip Trainer (\$253.75; www.amazon.com) “Your core is the source of your power, whether you’re punching or doing other sports moves,” says US-based trainer Jessica Kilts.

BALANCING KAYAK ROW

Works core and back

Anchor Rip Trainer at about waist height in front of you, then sit tall and hold bar with hands slightly wider than shoulders; left hand closest to end with tether. Lean back with knees bent and heels on floor, then raise left leg off floor and extend arms so bar is above knees [a]. Find your balance, then slowly rotate upper body (powering twist with obliques) and lower left hand towards floor, as if you were paddling in a kayak [b]. Return to starting position and repeat for 30 seconds, then switch sides to complete set.



b



OPTION #2

Resistance band (\$34.90; www.fitnessactivist.com)

"Tubing lets you move in different ways, which can increase or decrease resistance, providing a unique challenge for your abs," says Jessica. "Plus, they're easy to tuck into your bag."

L-SIT LAYBACK

Works shoulders and core

Anchor centre of resistance band over overhead bar (or over firmly closed door) and hold a handle in each hand. Sit with knees under anchor, legs straight. Tighten abs, lean back slightly and extend arms forward diagonally **[a]**. Keeping back and arms straight and chest lifted, lie down and draw arms back next to ears **[b]**. Rise and repeat for 30 seconds.



OPTION #3

Bosu balance trainer (\$133.60; www.amazon.com) "Using the unstable Bosu adds a component of muscle confusion that doing moves on a fixed surface won't accomplish," says Jessica. If you're planked out, take it to the Bosu for a refresh.

BOSU KNEE-THROUGH

Works shoulders, chest and core

Get into plank position with hands under shoulders on round side of Bosu, so body is straight from head to heels **[a]**. Shift weight to right hand and turn body left, pivoting on left foot, as you bring right knee under and towards left elbow **[b]**. Return to starting position and repeat on other side. Continue switching from side to side for 30 seconds.

THE REDO

Strength training

With so many different tools and workouts you can do, boredom certainly doesn't need to be an issue when it comes to your tone-up routines. You may have to dig around to find these apparatuses (some gyms keep them locked up), but the pay off will be worth it.



OPTION #1

Vipr (\$374; www.amazon.com) “Unlike heavy barbells or weights, you can do advanced moves without a high risk of injuries with the Vipr,” says Antonio Valverde, a US-based trainer. A weighted rubber tube you lift, swing and more, its name stands for vitality, performance and reconditioning.

SHOGUN

Works entire body

Stand with feet hip-width apart and staggered (left foot in front of right). Hold Vipr with left hand on centre handle and right on end. Bend knees into lunge and lower Vipr outside left leg **[a]**. Rise and step right leg forward into lunge as you arc Vipr up and to outside of right leg **[b]**. Step back to starting position and repeat. Do eight to 10 reps, then rest for 60 to 75 seconds. Switch sides and repeat to complete set. Do four sets.

OPTION #2

Superband (\$32; www.amazon.com) “It’s easy to work your entire body with the band. Unlike weights, the resistance varies as you extend it,” says Antonio. “You’re fighting the pull of it the entire time – up and down – which means you’re getting more toning,” he says. The thicker the band, the greater the resistance.

OVERHEAD SQUAT

Works entire body

Stand with feet hip-width apart on Superband. Hold band slightly wider than shoulders, palms facing forward, and then press arms overhead [a]. Squat in four counts [b], then quickly stand. Do five sets of six to eight reps.



OPTION #3

Plyo box (from \$66.80; www.amazon.com)

“Plyometric exercises, which involve explosive jumping moves, don’t break down muscle as much as moves with weights can. So you don’t get big muscle growth, but mainly strengthening and toning,” says Antonio. “If you want strong, sleek legs, you need to do plyo moves.”

HOPSCOTCH

Works legs and butt

Stand with feet hip-width apart in front of low step or plyo box. Bend knees, send hips and arms behind you [a]. Then jump, swinging arms forward and landing with right foot on box [b]. Step or jump down and repeat, landing on left foot to complete one rep. Do three to five sets of five reps, resting for 75 to 90 seconds between sets. ■

**THEY'VE
GOT THE
GLOBES...**

**AND
MORE**

*Just what does it take
to rock a glamorous,
body-hugging gown?
Four Hollywood stars
reveal their secrets.*

The 72nd Golden Globe Awards this January was a show to remember – not just for Jeremy Renner's notorious comment about Jennifer Lopez's "globes", but the jaw-droppingly gorgeous gowns of stars with killer shoulders, arms, abs and legs, like Kate Hudson, Jennifer Aniston, Heidi Klum, and, of course, J. Lo. Get their fitness mantras here.

TEXT CLAIRE CONNORS, LINDSAY FARBER, ASHLEY ROSS, KRISTEN ALDRIDGE & ESTELLE LOW



JENNIFER LOPEZ

Famous for her dangerous curves, screen siren Jennifer Lopez pulled out all stops at the recent awards ceremony when she showed up in a slinky number with a cleavage-baring neckline and thigh-high split. We're not the only ones who noticed. When she offered to open the award envelope, saying "I have the nails", co-presenter Jeremy Renner remarked: "You got the globes, too." The media went wild with this. But we think her toned gams deserve more attention.

J. LO'S MANTRA
Nothing gets
in the way

We're all guilty of making excuses to skip exercise. You know, when 7pm rolls around and you decide that having dinner and an early night is way more important? Not Jennifer.

On how she juggles work, two kids and fitness, she says: "We all have our challenges with healthy living. My workout is scheduled for 9pm after my kids go to bed. Am I looking forward to this? No, I'm not. Am I thinking about cancelling? Yes. Will I cancel? No! Because I am a work in progress, a woman in progress, and that's the dedication that it takes." Now, that's the kind of commitment we're talking about.

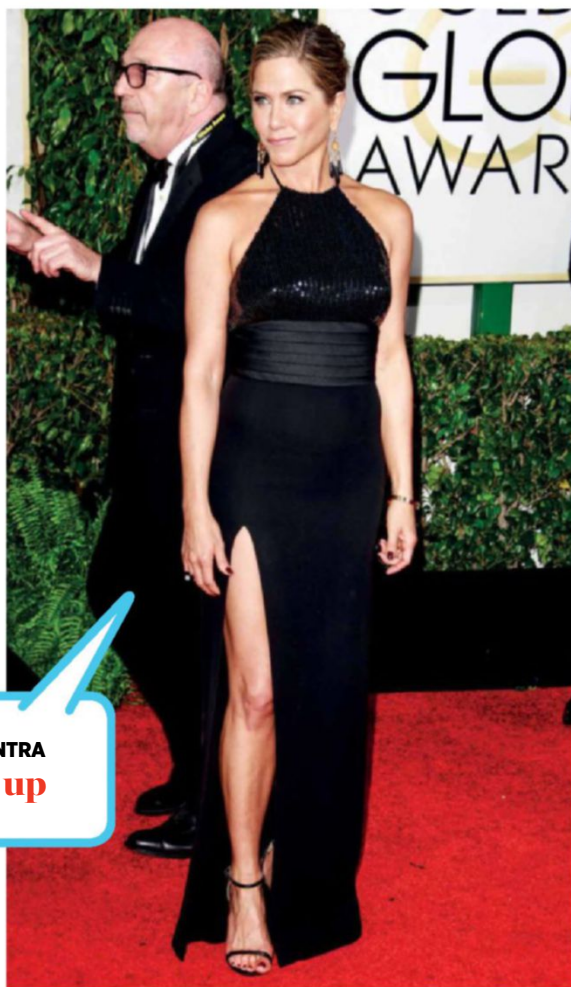
JENNIFER ANISTON

She has a super tight bod, and she knows it. The American darling oozed confidence and class in this Saint Laurent halter dress that flaunts her strong shoulders, sculpted biceps and one very shapely leg. Well played, Jen.

To fight flab and workout boredom, don't stick to the same old routine. Take your cue from Jennifer: "I noticed dramatic changes in my body after I started doing yoga, but I also think you have to shake things up. I have a spin bike, an elliptical and a treadmill, and I do cardio for at least 20 minutes a day. Even that short burst makes a difference."

Her emergency 10-minute workout? The spin bike. "I can take it uphill, I can take it downhill and I can sprint," she says. "And it's great when I need to make phone calls. I put on what I call my Janet Jackson headpiece and I'm set."

JEN'S MANTRA
Mix it up



KATE HUDSON

Admit it: You were too taken by the plunging neckline and daring side slits to notice this rear view. Kate owns such an amazingly perky butt that even close pal Jennifer Aniston couldn't resist playfully patting it. Later, on *The Ellen DeGeneres Show*, she gushed about Kate's tush.

What do you do when you have 10 minutes to spare? Play Candy Crush or browse Facebook? Kate whips out her skipping rope for a quick

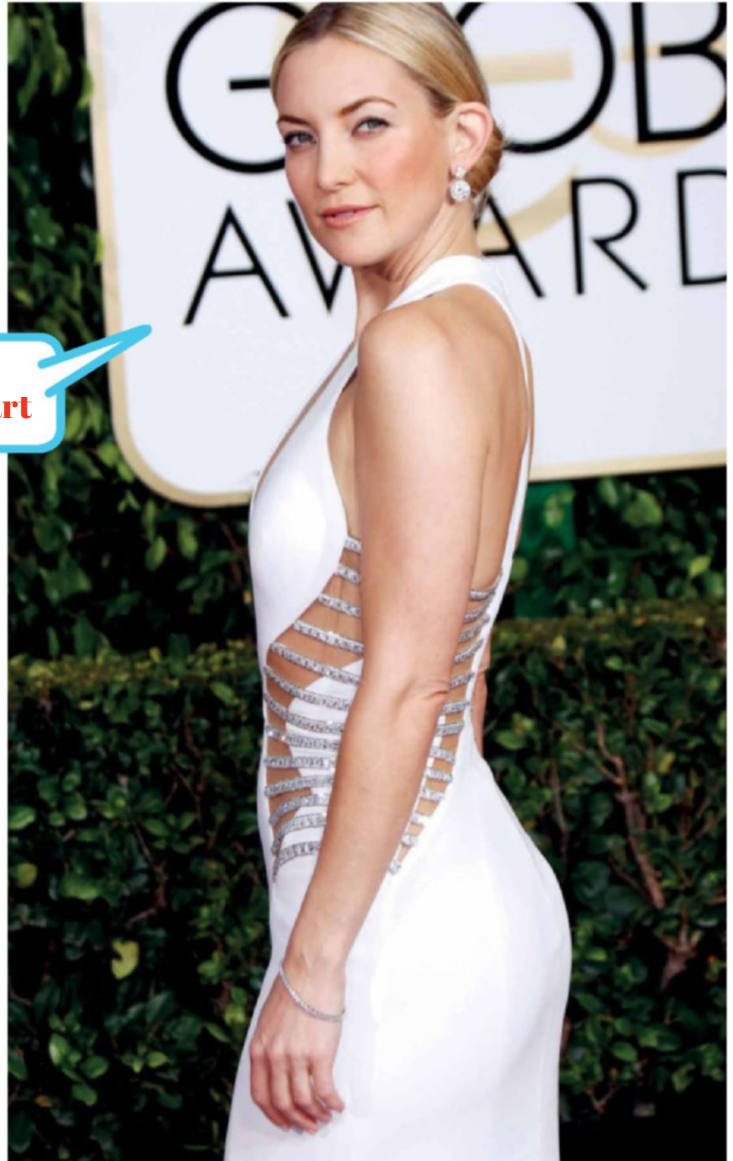
workout. "I always carry a jump rope with me.

Whenever I have a break during the day, I'll just jump. I'll do 150, take a short break, then do another 150," she said.

Of course, her fab figure is also a result of her devoted pilates practice of more than 15 years.

"It's the basis of what I do for exercise because it's dance-oriented," says the groovy actress.

KATE'S MANTRA
Be time-smart



HEIDI KLUM

Always impeccably groomed and toned, this modelling queen looked so slender and striking in her fire engine-red Versace gown. At 41, Heidi's trim and shapely silhouette easily puts 21-year-olds to shame.

HEIDI'S MANTRA
Stay on your toes

Like experts always say, staying in shape is a lifelong commitment. And we particularly love Heidi's attitude: "I pretend it's bikini season all year round and regularly make healthy decisions. My favourite workout is a long run on the Westside Highway that

stretches along the Hudson River in New York City – it's a beautiful path. You see the same people running every morning and they inspire me to keep going. That and knowing there is a Starbucks at the end of the route!"

Even when time-strapped, Heidi manages to pull together a workout. "Sometimes I jump on the trampoline with my kids, take a hike with my dogs, or when I'm travelling, do a few sit-ups in my hotel room before I head to work." Super role model, Heidi! **■**

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- 10 Lot 1 Level 2
- 11 Marina Bay Sands Basement 1
- 12 Marina Square Level 3
- 13 Paragon Level 4
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*FIRM THE FLAB AND REVERSE
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BY NATALIE GINGERICH MACKENZIE
PHOTOGRAPHY JORG BADURA

Not only does a perky rear look fab in jeans, but it also helps power your legs through everything from a killer group fitness class to a tough run, so you can work out harder with less effort. To sculpt this key area in record time, we turned to Andrea Orbeck, the trainer behind some of Hollywood's hottest booties.

Andrea follows the same "glute trifecta" whether she's working with Heidi Klum or Victoria's Secret models: cardio to fire up the butt and blast fat, sculptors that target the largest muscles in the lower body, and moves that home in on the glutes from every angle. Put her super effective strategy into practice with this workout and you'll never fear skinny jeans again.



THE PLAN

How it works Three times a week, walk on a treadmill for 10 to 15 minutes, increasing the incline every few minutes until it's at least 10 per cent. Or go up and down the stairs instead. Then do two sets of each move in order without resting in between.

You'll need A box or bench, a pair of 2kg-4kg dumbbells and a looped resistance band (or knot a band to form a loop). The treadmill is optional.

1 SINGLE-LEG SQUAT

Works butt and legs

Stand with ball of right foot on box or bench behind you and left foot on floor one stride's length in front of it. Hold dumbbell in each hand with arms extended at sides and palms facing each other **[a]**. Bend left knee until thigh is parallel to floor **[b]**. Rise to starting position. Do 20 reps, then switch sides to complete set.



2 SQUAT ARABESQUE

Works butt and legs

Stand with feet shoulder-width apart and hold dumbbells **[shown]** in front of shoulders, elbows close to sides and palms facing each other; squat **[a]**. Rise as you lift right leg out to side **[b]**. Return to starting position. Do 15 reps, then switch sides to complete set.



3 SQUEEZE BRIDGE

Works butt and hamstrings

Loop band around thighs, just above knees, and lie with knees bent and feet hip-width apart on floor. Extend arms at sides. [a]. Squeeze butt as you lift hips [b]. Draw knees away from each other, then closer together again, and lower hips to starting position. Do 20 reps.



4 HIP EXTENSION

Works butt, hamstrings and shoulders

Get on all fours with knees under hips and wrists under shoulders. Loop band just above left knee and under right foot. Then raise right leg several centimetres off floor [a]. Extend right leg to hip height behind you [b]. Return to starting position. Do 20 reps, then switch sides to complete set.



5 MERMAID

Works butt and outer thighs

Loop resistance band around upper thighs and lie on left side with legs stacked. Bend knees 90 degrees, place left hand behind head and right hand on floor; lift feet to hip height [a]. Keep feet touching as you lift right knee as high as you can [b]. Return to starting position. Do 20 reps, then switch sides to complete set.



6 WINDSHIELD WIPER

Works butt and outer thighs

Loop resistance band around upper thighs and lie on left side with legs stacked. Bend left knee 90 degrees, and extend right leg; place left hand behind head and right hand on floor. Keep hips squared as you lift right leg as high as you can [shown]. Return to starting position. Do 20 reps, then switch sides to complete set. ▢



TRAIL BUDDIES

INVEST IN PROPER FOOTWEAR FOR YOUR OFF-ROAD RUNS.

Venturing into a nature park or forest can be extremely rewarding. Think fresh air, animal sightings and the thrill of discovering new routes. To avoid slipping and stumbling along the way, pick the right shoes. These offer the grip and protection you'll need on uneven ground.



TRY THESE ROUTES!

MACRITCHIE RESERVOIR PARK OFFERS WALKING ROUTES AND RUNNING TRAILS OF VARYING DISTANCES AND DIFFICULTY LEVELS. REMEMBER NOT TO FEED THE MONKEYS!

+ TAP FOR MORE MAPS

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Columbia Peakfreak Xcrsn Xcel (\$159)

The flexible and grippy outsole makes it easy to conquer dirt roads as well rocky or gravelled paths.

Best for Varied terrain

Weight 246g

CUSHY

Skechers Gorun Ultra (\$169)

The excellent cushioning reduces impact, especially on the heel.

Best for Dry paths

Weight 201g

STURDY

Brooks Cascadia 9

(\$169, Key Power Sports)

The tough and solid outsole protects your foot from rocks and unexpected obstacles.

Best for Tricky terrain

Weight 281g

DURABLE

New Balance Leadville 1210v2 (\$199)

The springy midsole cushioning promises energy return while the robust Vibram outsole gives good traction.

Best for Long-distance runs

Weight 248g

LIGHTWEIGHT

Nike Zoom Terra Kiger 2 (\$199)

With a sleek profile and responsive sole, this offers maximum agility and a good ground feel.

Best for Races and uptempo runs

Weight 198g



TRAIL MIX

Skip the gym and get an even better workout outdoors while trail running. Follow our get-started guide and you're just a hop, leap and zigzag away from being sleeker and leaner than ever.

BY LISA JHUNG PHOTOGRAPHY DUSTIN SNIPES



Run for the hills!

The treadmill is unbeatable when it comes to options – you can adjust the speed and incline to suit any fitness goal. But it's not called the dreadmill for nothing. Running in place is a quick sprint to snoozeville.

Trail running, on the other hand, has inclines and excitement built in. You can't zone out or you risk running into a tree branch, tripping over a rock, or launching yourself over a cliff. Also, there's just something about jogging in fresh air with birds chirping and leaves rustling that puts a little extra zip in your step.

And your muscles? Well, they love a good trail as well. Thanks to the unstable surfaces, you're constantly adjusting your body from head to toe as you navigate the path, locking in your core and engaging the glutes to steady yourself. "As a result, your muscles get more toned, and you burn extra calories," says Dr John Munyak, director of sports medicine at Maimonides Medical Center in the US.

To help familiarise you with your new BWF (best workout forever), so you can start reaping all the rewards, we've gathered all you need to know to hit the ground sprinting.

A woman with long brown hair tied back, wearing a red sports bra and black shorts, is running up a steep, rocky hill. She is seen from behind, with her right leg lifted and foot planted on a rock. The hill is covered in reddish-brown rocks and sparse dry grass. In the background, there are green trees and a white building with a dome under a clear blue sky.

Studies show that exercising in a natural environment improves mood, combats anxiety, and helps you stick to a fitness plan.

GET STARTED

Trail running is mostly putting one foot in front of the other, but it's certainly no walk in the park. These pointers can help you run more comfortably, so you're not counting down the minutes or kilometres.

1 Shorten your stride uphill.

On inclines, take small, quick steps and keep your chest lifted. Leaning over impedes airflow to your lungs.

2 Use your arms. When running on uneven terrain, especially downhill, raise them out to the sides like you would if you were walking on a balance beam for stability. This is one sport where it's okay if they flail around a bit.

3 Keep your eyes on the trail.

Just like in mountain biking, you need to choose your line or the path where you'll place your feet to follow the smoothest, safest route. Keeping your focus a few metres in front of you will also help you react quickly to obstacles, such as tree roots.

4 Outsmart the wind. A little breeze is part of the trail

running experience (extra resistance equals additional calorie burn), but nobody wants to brave a windstorm just to torch more calories! If it's too blustery outside, opt for a densely wooded or hill-protected area, so you don't end up running in place.

5 Beat the heat. Hydrate before you set out on a run, and carry extra water with you. Try to hit the trails early or late in the day, when it's cooler, and seek shady routes.

6 Lace up in the right shoes.

Those designed specifically for running trails have a wider, lugged outsole that grips the terrain and sturdier materials to protect your feet from rocks. Some are even waterproof (splashing through puddles is encouraged!).



FEEL THE BURN. DON'T BE SURPRISED IF YOU'RE EXTRA SORE THE DAY AFTER YOUR FIRST TRAIL RUN. STRETCHING POST-SESS AND A COUPLE OF TIMES A DAY FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS CAN HELP ALLEVIATE SOME OF THE DISCOMFORT.

Pick your path

A trail can be anything from a dirt road to a rocky climb up a hill. If a friend asks if you want to run some technical single track, it would be nice to know what you're in for. Here's the low-down on your options.

● **Single track** A path just wide enough for one runner, hiker or biker at a time.

● **Double track** Sometimes called a fire road, this is wide enough for a service vehicle to travel on.

● **Non-technical** A smooth, obstacle-free trail. If you're new to trail running, run such routes until you're more comfortable.

● **Technical** A trail, either single or double track, with obstacles like rocks, roots or ruts that requires more focus and agility than a non-technical one – and is way more fun. This is where it's extra important to pick your line so you don't stumble.

Follow the rules

Word is that it's more fun to exercise outdoors, so you won't be the only one on the path. As nobody likes a trail hog, know your etiquette to keep the peace.

RULE #1 Bikes should yield to hikers and runners. That said, since it's harder for bikes to move out of the way, it's polite to step to the side to let them pass. Leave the earphones at home, so you can hear people approaching.

RULE #2 You don't want to scare the daylighters out of someone in the middle of nowhere, so let hikers know you're approaching from behind with a subtle cough or by saying "Good morning!" If they don't hear you, say "on your right"

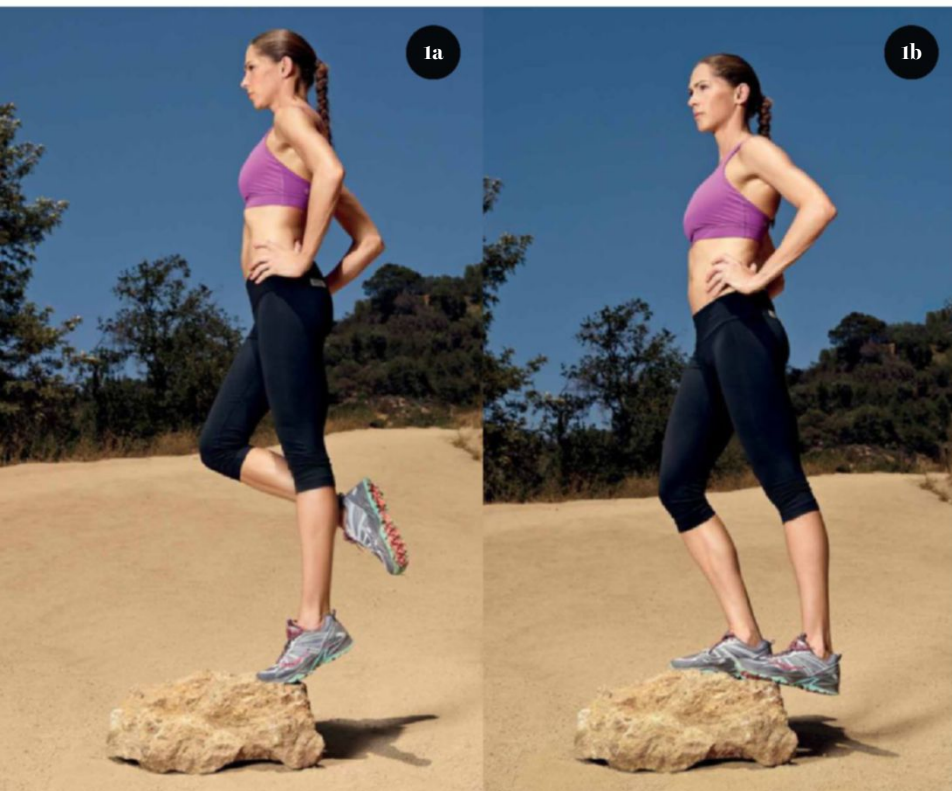
and pass them on their right side. It also pays to smile and say "thank you" as you fly by.

RULE #3 Nobody likes a litterbug. Never ever leave trash behind. That includes water bottles, gel wrappers and toilet paper.

RULE #4 If you need to pee or maybe you just want to check out that weird plant near the trail, avoid walking on fragile fauna like flowers. In other words, always tread lightly. ►

TRAIL MOVES

These exercises tackle the muscles you use most when running on uneven surfaces. Some of those muscles are large, others are very tiny but very important. Doing the exercises regularly (after your Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday runs if you're following The Four-week Trail Running Plan) will make you stronger and more flexible, improve your balance and endurance, and possibly even minimise your risk of injury.



1 SINGLE-HEEL RAISE

WHY TRY IT Uneven terrain demands a large range of movement in your ankle joint, which can stress the Achilles tendon. "These two moves [both the raise and stretch] help keep the fibres of the tendon aligned vertically while improving blood flow," says US-based physical therapist Charlie Merrill. "They help prevent damage – small adhesions or scarred tissue – within the muscle and tendon too."

- Stand with ball of left foot on edge of step, stair or rock. If necessary, hold on to something for balance. Lower heel towards ground, then rise on toes [1a]. Do 10 reps, then switch sides and repeat. Do three sets and build up to 20 reps.

TWO-FOOT CALF STRETCH

- Stand with both feet on step, stair or rock. Move left foot to edge, so heel is unsupported, and lower heel towards ground until you feel the stretch through back of lower leg [1b]. Hold for 20 to 30 seconds, then bend left knee and keep stretching (this targets different calf muscle). Repeat stretch with right foot.



2 SINGLE-LEG BALANCE

WHY TRY IT "This improves your balance while strengthening the small muscles that help stabilise your feet and ankles," says Dr Munyak.

- Balancing on left leg, raise right knee in front of you, then lower five times while keeping foot off ground. Next, raise right leg out to side and lower five times, then extend behind you and bring back five times. Finally, lean forward and touch ground in front of left foot with right hand [shown]. Rise and repeat. Do five reps, then switch legs and repeat entire move.

3 SINGLE-LEG BALANCE

WHY TRY IT "This move progression activates the gluteus medius and small hip rotator muscles, which help control the movement of your femur head [the ball] inside your hip socket, especially on uneven surfaces," says Charlie.

- Lie on right side with legs bent. Rest head on right hand. Keeping abs tight, raise left knee (keep feet together) [shown]. Do five reps, then keep knees touching and raise and lower left foot five times. Next, lift left leg a few centimetres above your right and repeat move from beginning. (You're still just rotating leg from hip socket.) Finally, extend left leg a few centimetres behind your right and raise and lower left foot (knee angles down as you do this) five times. Repeat entire series five times, then switch legs.





When was the last time you and a pal sprinted to the finish on the treadmill?



4 SIDE BICYCLE LIFT

WHY TRY IT "This pilates-based move helps with torso and pelvis stability," says Laura Tarbell, a US-based pilates instructor and creator of the DVD *Pilates for Runners*. "It mimics the stride motion of running."

- Kneel on right knee and place right hand on ground under shoulder. Extend left leg parallel to ground. As you inhale, bend left knee and move leg forward (lead with knee). Exhale as you draw back, **keeping leg straight [shown]**. Bring forward slightly, so it's in line with upper body and inhale as you lift leg upwards. Then exhale and lower; toes almost touch ground. Do series eight to 10 times, switch sides and repeat.

5 BREASTSTROKE

WHY TRY IT "When you get tired during a run, it's easy to lose your form," says Laura. "You lean forward more, which compromises your breathing." This move opens your chest and strengthens the muscles in your back to help you maintain good posture.

- Lie face down with legs extended and toes pointed out behind you; arms extended in front of you. Lift arms and head about 5cm off ground. Inhale as you lift upper body higher and circle arms back towards legs **[shown]**. Exhale and bend arms, driving them forward next to ears and back to starting position (like breaststroke in swimming). Do eight to 10 reps, then sit back onto heels to stretch lower back. ►





Buddy up for safety when you can. If you're heading out solo, always let someone know where you're going and when – just in case you get injured and don't have your phone (or service).

THE FOUR-WEEK TRAIL RUNNING PLAN

Devised by US-based coach Lea Stenerson, this eases you into trail running. With run-walk combo workouts, modest speed work, hill running and recovery days, it will have you fleet-footed and trail-fit in just a month. Note: All runs start with a brisk five-minute walking warm-up and end with a five-minute walking cool-down that are included in the total time.

DAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
WEEK 1 (And Week 5 if you keep going after a month.)	Off	30 minutes easy (Alternate four-minute runs with one-minute walks) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off	35 minutes easy (Alternate four-minute runs with one-minute walks for 20 minutes. Finish by running fast for 20 seconds, then recovering easy for 40 seconds. Repeat twice more) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off	45 minutes easy (Alternate four-minute runs with one-minute walks) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off
WEEK 2 (Week 6)	Off or cardio cross-train (swim, bike, row, aerobics class) for 35 to 40 minutes	35 minutes moderate (Run six minutes at a moderate pace, then walk or jog easy for two minutes to recover. Repeat twice more) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Cardio cross-train for 30 to 45 minutes	40 minutes moderate to hard hills (Run uphill for two minutes, then walk down; repeat four more times. If you have extra time left, run) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off	50 minutes easy (Alternate four-minute runs with one-minute walks) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Hike for 60 minutes
WEEK 3 (Week 7)	Off	40 minutes easy (Alternate nine-minute runs with one-minute walks) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off or cardio cross-train for 35 to 40 minutes	45 minutes easy (Alternate six-minute runs with one-minute walks four times. Finish by running fast for 20 seconds, then recovering easy for 40 seconds. Repeat four more times) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off	55 minutes easy (Alternate six-minute runs with one-minute walks) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off
Week 4 (Week 8)	Off or cardio cross-train for 35 to 40 minutes	40 minutes moderate (Run eight minutes at a moderate pace, then walk or jog easy for two minutes to recover. Repeat twice more) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Cardio cross-train for 30 to 45 minutes	45 minutes moderate to hard hills (Run uphill for three minutes, then walk down. Repeat three more times. If you have extra time left, run) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Off	60 minutes easy (Alternate nine-minute runs with one-minute walks) PLUS Do Trail Moves	Hike for 60 minutes

Reach your goals

Working towards something – a race, summiting a peak, increasing your distance or time – can give extra purpose and focus to every workout. To reach a specific goal, Lea suggests you repeat the plan above (weeks through eight or beyond) but make the following tweaks to certain workouts:

- **Single track goal: Race a 5km or 10km trail** On Thursday of weeks five and seven, replace the workout with interval training: run one minute fast followed by a minute of recovery eight to 10 times.
- **Goal: Climb a mountain** Take a hilly route for your Saturday run and/or Sunday hike. Also take hilly trails for some weekday workouts.
- **Goal: Run an hour (or two, or three) straight** Keep following the plan. Add five to 10 minutes to each weekend run and hike every two weeks. ■

“I weighed more than my guy friends.”

That didn't bother Janice until she realised her baggiest pants no longer fitted. As told to LEE YING YING.

JANICE'S CHALLENGE As a child, I had asthma and was never really into sports. However, I was enrolled in my school's Trim and Fit (TAF) programme for overweight and obese students. But that didn't make a difference, and my weight spiked higher after I entered university. Stress, bingeing and my sedentary lifestyle piled on the kilos. I was used to being heavier than my male friends, but when I could not button my largest pair of pants, I knew I had to slim down.

THE PLAN

● A good friend decided we should participate in healthier activities instead of planning our outings around food. He encouraged me to join him in a 15km race and, although apprehensive, I agreed. That was how I got exposed to the world of running.

I started by jogging five rounds around the campus track to prep for this first run of my life. I gradually progressed to eight and then 10 rounds, before embarking on 7km runs around the campus. I didn't note the time I took to run 15km, but was proud to have completed the race.

After the event, I continued to run at least once a week. To ensure I stayed on track in my weight-loss journey, I followed workout videos on Youtube. These included ab and leg exercises as well as yoga

moves. Making diet changes played a big part too. I traded sweet drinks for plain water, and ate less meat as well as more vegetables. It was a true test of self-control!

LIFE NOW

● I've come to love running. The exhilaration and enjoyment is indescribable. From feeling the cool breeze to admiring the scenery, my motivation increases with every run.

It has not only made me fitter, but also helped me develop a positive mindset as I've learnt to embrace what every run has to offer.

WEEKLY WORKOUT SCHEDULE

● Exercise at least twice a week, including a short run (3km-6km) and swimming, cycling or a video-based workout.

BEFORE



JANICE TAN

Age 28

Height 162cm

Weight lost
12.5kg in 30 months

AFTER

It's all about the journey

Exercising outdoors has made Janice more appreciative of her surroundings.



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trainer designed to bring

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Eat Right

FUEL YOUR BODY!

Lean and green

Spinach, kale and chard aren't just low-calorie, vitamin-packed and high-fibre: **A compound in the membranes of these green plants may actually encourage weight loss**, say Swedish researchers reporting in the journal *Appetite*. When they gave overweight women on a diet supplements with green-plant membranes, they lost more weight than those in a control group and – bonus – had a decreased preference for sweets and chocolates.



SODA FLOP

*Sugary beverages pack on the kilos. In case, you're thinking you can indulge occasionally because you don't have a weight problem, you couldn't be more wrong. A new study from Tufts University in the US suggests that **even healthy bodies may respond to sweetened drinks by storing excess calories as visceral fat.** That's a particularly dangerous form of connective tissue that surrounds the internal organs and increases your risk of heart disease and diabetes. So, while a sweetened soda habit may not have tipped your scales yet, you could still be setting yourself up for health problems later on, says study author and nutrition professor Nicola Mckeown. Her advice: Ditch the sweet stuff in favour of calorie-free water.*

Too busy to cook?

We all know home-cooked food is much healthier than what we eat outside, but most of us simply don't have the time. The Hungry Chef, a new meal kit delivery service, provides pre-weighed prepared ingredients, along with a simple recipe for a yummy, wholesome meal that can be ready within 30 minutes.

Portions are individually packed so you can cook for one or a famished family of six. Simply indicate the quantity needed when ordering your preferred meal online. No waste, no mess! Plus, you can order ahead for the week. Ingredients are labelled with storage instructions (pantry, fridge or freezer), so you can stash them as soon as your box of goodies arrive. Log on to www.thehungrychef.sg.

SHAPE RAVE

WHAT A GIRL WANTS

Meatless Mondays don't have to mean solo salad lunches at your cubicle. Gather your girlfriends and check out Joie (pronounced as joy), a contemporary restaurant serving vegetarian dishes with a Japanese-European influence.

The six-course lunch (\$38.80++) has options to tantalise even the most reluctant veggie eaters. Our favourites include steamed **Matsutake Cake** made with the prized Japanese pine mushroom, as well as **Snow Pear and Napa Cabbage Consomme**, a nourishing double-boiled vegetable broth with baby pear and Chinese almonds. Joie is located at #12-01 Orchard Central (tel: 6838-6966).



NEW IN STORES

SHIOK SNACKS
HAVE THESE ON HAND
WHEN CRAVINGS STRIKE.



CHEWY Beat post-workout hunger pangs with the **32GI Foodbar - Nutty Oats & Fig** (\$7.50, Activ360 by Zen'Yu). It contains 11.5g protein per bar, plus lots of dried figs, oats and almonds.
375kcal per 60g bar



ZESTY Want something fizzy? Try **San Pellegrino Pompelmo Sparkling Grapefruit Beverage** (\$11.50 for six-pack, selected retailers) with 16 per cent grapefruit juice.
156kcal per 330ml can



CRISPY Each 35g serving of gluten-free **Simply Protein Crunchy Whey Protein Snack with Raspberry and Coconut** (\$3.50 for 105g pack, www.diabetichop.com.sg) has 9g of filling fibre.
110kcal per 35g serving

THE PERFECT BREW

Be your own barista with this sleek and fuss-free coffee maker.

Coffee lovers know the prerequisites for a good cup of joe: Clean tap water, freshly ground coffee, a consistent brewing temperature, and the right brewing time. Boiling or heating the coffee for too long results in a bitter brew, while using lukewarm water or a too-short brewing time leads to a bland drink. **Wilfa Svart Presisjon Automatic Coffee Brewer** (from \$399, Papa Palheta) simplifies and fine-tunes the process.

USER-FRIENDLINESS



The detachable parts – water tank, filter holder and coffee jug – are easy to put together. Fill the first with cold tap water. Then line the second with a filter (not included), add ground coffee, and hit the start button. The flow control of the filter is adjustable – lower to increase the extraction time if you like your coffee strong, or vice versa. The kit comes with a measuring spoon, and the recommended coffee measures are clearly marked on the water tank. No need for mind-boggling calculations.

EFFICACY

The water is very quickly heated to a brewing temperature of 92 to 96 deg C, and transferred to the filter holder via the sleek pump system. Using one litre of water and 65g of freshly ground coffee, the machine had our java ready in less than five minutes. Impressive.

CLEANING

Washing the water tank and coffee jug is easy, but be careful with the filter holder. When we minimised the flow control for a more aromatic brew, hot water and grounds spilled out of the filter holder. As some of the grounds got into the grooves of the filter holder, removing it later took some effort.

VALUE

It isn't cheap, but it's comparable to popular capsule coffee machines in the market. This scores high on aesthetics, too. You know you want it on your counter!

DRAWBACK

It may be an automatic brewer, but you'll have to keep an eye on the machine to prevent overflowing.

OVERALL VERDICT

Once you figure out the mechanics, you'll never have to deal with substandard coffee again. **A**

TEXT ESTELLE LOW PHOTO WONG WEI LIANG

Curry in a hurry

Curry chicken doesn't need hours to prepare. Donna Hay, author of *Fresh and Light*, infuses bold flavours into a low-cal meal that cooks up in just 15 minutes.

THAI GREEN CURRY CHICKEN SKEWERS WITH GINGER QUINOA

Serves: 4

Cook time: 5 minutes

Total time: 15 minutes

- > 2 tbsp Thai green curry paste
- > ¼ cup canned coconut cream
- > cooking spray
- > 570g chicken breast fillets, sliced into 3cm strips
- > 3 cups cooked quinoa
- > 1 tbsp finely grated ginger
- > ½ cup chopped cilantro, plus more for garnish
- > 2 scallions, finely chopped
- > 1 tsp sesame oil
- > sliced limes for garnish
- > mint leaves for garnish

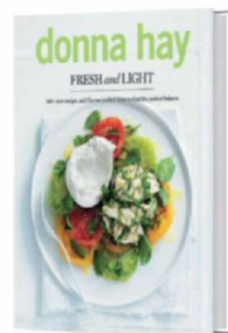
1. Preheat broiler. In small bowl, combine curry paste and coconut cream. Lightly coat baking sheet with cooking spray.

2. Thread chicken onto skewers and coat with curry mixture. Place skewers on baking sheet and broil for five to seven minutes, or until cooked through.

3. In large bowl, mix quinoa, ginger, cilantro, scallions and sesame oil. Divide mixture between plates, top with chicken skewers, and add lime slices, mint and cilantro to garnish.

* Nutrition score per serving

385 calories, 9g fat (3.5g saturated), 37g carbs, 40g protein, 5g fibre, 114mg sodium **B**



BONUS TIP

Give quinoa extra flavour by cooking it in chicken or vegetable stock instead of water. You'll want to make more than you need. It will keep for a few days in the fridge and can turn protein and veggies into a fast, delicious complete meal.

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COSMO

100ml
213 calories
14g sugar

DAIQUIRI

100ml
167 calories
8g sugar

**BLOODY
MARY**

175ml
169 calories
4g sugar

HANGOVER HELPER

*If you overdid it last night, have
a sports drink or broth-y soup.
Both will replace lost electrolytes
and help you rehydrate.*

MARGARITA

100ml
186 calories
5.5g sugar

MARTINI

100ml
190 calories
2g sugar

**VODKA
CRANBERRY**

175ml
186 calories
15g sugar

Cocktail time!

*Before saying yes to your favourite mixed
drinks, know just what they're packing.*

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Salt shockers

THESE FOODS PACK AS MUCH SODIUM AS SOYA SAUCE!

BY ESTELLE LOW



As any bloat-fearing girl knows, it's always a good idea to ask for low-sodium soya sauce when ordering that spicy tuna roll, as just one tablespoon (15ml) of the regular kind can contain a whopping 1,022mg of sodium. But besides the popular condiment, there are other foods that are surprisingly high in salt, says Jaclyn Reutens, a dietitian at Aptima Nutrition and Sports Consultants.

Though the Health Promotion Board of Singapore recommends no more than 2,000mg (one teaspoon) of sodium a day, Jaclyn advises keeping it below 1,500mg. Setting a lower limit is the safer bet as we tend to underestimate the amount we're eating. "It's not easy to track the amount of sodium in your diet as most foods come with pre-added salt," she says.

In addition to that jeans-don't-fit feeling, a high-sodium diet raises your risk for high blood pressure and heart disease, so trimming salt from your diet is a smart move. Here are some places to start.

SMOKED FISH AND SEAFOOD

Before salmon is smoked to derive that delightful oaky taste, it needs to be cured. The curing process involves slathering the fish with salt, a major sodium contributor, and other ingredients. Just one slice of smoked salmon contains 317mg. By comparison, a slice of salmon sashimi has about 5mg. If you must have smoked fish, limit yourself to three slices, says Jaclyn.

BOTTLED SALAD DRESSING

Yes, it may seem easier to buy it rather than make it, but most commercial brands of salad dressing can have up to 300mg of sodium per two tablespoons.

Sugar- and fat-free varieties, which seem like the healthier option, tend to compensate for the loss of flavour by amping up the saltiness. You can choose low-sodium or no-salt-added varieties, but they probably won't taste good. A better idea: Use lemon juice or a vinaigrette dressing on your salad. One tablespoon of each contains less than 1mg of sodium, says Jaclyn.

FAST FOOD SALADS

Having chicken caesar salad instead of a cheeseburger may save calories, but the sodium content of fast food salads is amped up by the ready-made dressing. Plus, that sachet of ranch isn't the only culprit. High-sodium meats, croutons and other additions add to the salt ►

Besides the salt we add to food, about 75% of salt is hidden in processed foods.

SOURCE WWW.WORLDACTIONONSALT.COM



count. For example, the charbroiled chicken salad at Carl's Jr. has 850mg of sodium with dressing. If this is your only lunch option, skip the dressing and toss out some croutons.

BREAD AND CROISSANTS

Flaky, buttery pastries like croissants are known as fat bombs, but they also have a lot of sodium – about 400mg for just one. Another sodium-laden item: bagels. Some larger ones contain nearly 700mg!

Even wholemeal bread has a fair amount at about 150mg per slice. "This is always a shocker for our clients because they think bread doesn't contain much salt at all," says Tammy Lakatos Shames, a US-based dietitian and author of *The Secret To Skinny: How Salt Makes You Fat, and the 4-Week Plan to Drop a Size and Get Healthier with Simple Low-Sodium Swaps* (US\$12.44 or S\$16.66, www.amazon.com).

"It actually has nearly the same amount of sodium as a serving of potato chips, but as the salt is on the surface of the chip, it's easier to taste. With bread, it's baked in," she says. As a guide, have no more than two slices of wholemeal bread each time, says Jaclyn.

PROCESSED MEAT

You might want to think twice about filling your morning sandwich with luncheon meat, ham or another processed cold cut. These artificially derived items – reconstituted from ground meat, bread crumbs, pepper and salt – are saturated with sodium.

A slice of canned luncheon meat has 390mg, chicken ham 241mg, and a chicken sausage has 669mg. Even a really thin slice of bacon packs 192mg, so forget about second helpings! Where possible, use fresh or frozen meat and tofu. They're great in soup and stir-fries, and have way less sodium than their processed counterparts, says Jaclyn.

BE SODIUM-SMART

Cut unnecessary salt from everyday meals with these tips from Jaclyn Reutens, dietitian at Aptima Nutrition and Sports Consultants.

WHEN EATING OUT...

- Ask for less gravy
- Request for sauces to be served on the side
- Resist dipping meats into soya sauce
- Don't add salt to food
- Avoid finishing soups

WHEN COOKING...

- Use flavour-boosting herbs and spices like thyme, paprika and basil
- Use freshly squeezed lemon and lime juice to marinate food or as salad dressings



For every 1g of salt we cut from our average daily intake, there could be 4,147 fewer deaths from strokes and heart attacks each year.

SOURCE: WWW.WORLDACTIONONSALT.COM

FETA CHEESE While it's a good source of calcium and protein, feta cheese can be loaded with sodium – 1,376mg per 150g cup. If you love feta cheese, look for low-sodium versions whenever possible. A better choice is plain yogurt with about 150mg, or a slice of Swiss cheese, which has just 20mg. Jaclyn suggests using light spreadable cream cheese, which contains 396mg per cup.

CANNED SOUP

In general, canned or preserved products are higher in sodium, due to the addition of preservatives, sauces and seasonings. Ready-made soup may be instantly gratifying on a dreary day, but one serving of cream of seafood has over 1,000mg of sodium – two-thirds of your daily quota! The solution? Prepare your own broth. For instance, boil celery, carrots, onions, garlic and mushrooms for a few hours, adding chicken bones if you want more flavour, suggests Jaclyn. If you're using stock cubes, pick those with less than 200mg sodium per 100g. **S**

WHICH IS SALTIER?

In general, soya sauces come with staggering amounts of sodium. That's why they make everything taste so savoury. Here's a comparison of brands available here.

	Brand of soya sauce	Sodium (mg) per 15ml (1 tbsp)
DARK (STANDARD GRADE)	Tai Hua	1,022
	Tiger Brand	769
	Fairprice	623
	Kwong Cheong Thye	534
	Thai Sing	175

	Brand of soya sauce	Sodium (mg) per 15ml (1 tbsp)
LIGHT (STANDARD GRADE)	Tai Hua	968
	Thai Sing	996
	Fairprice	965
	Tiger Brand	759
	Kwong Cheong Thye	624



Everything you knew about is wrong

It's been demonised for decades but as it turns out, fat – even the saturated kind – is not all bad for you. Here are seven facts you should know about the fat in your diet.

BY SASHA GONZALES

PHOTO JUNGYEOL & MINA/TONGRO IMAGES/CORBIS



In an effort to live a healthy lifestyle, many of us choose to limit the amount of fat we consume. We trim meat of all visible fat before cooking it, we make a conscious decision not to drizzle oil on our salad, and we stick to non- or low-fat everything, from yogurt and cheese to cereal and baked goods.

But many nutrition experts believe we are taking our obsession with fat a little too far. Fat has gotten such a bad rep over the years that we've come to look at it as the enemy. Out of the fear that we will gain weight and damage our arteries, we've given it – even the good varieties – the heave-ho.

Unfortunately, much of what we know about fat is not all accurate, and as a result, we have formed dietary habits that are doing our bodies more harm than good. For instance, if we are not avoiding fat totally, we are consuming the wrong kinds or else misusing them in cooking.

To make better decisions about the type and amount of fat we should eat, it's important to know what we've been getting wrong all along.

(1) NOT ALL FATS ARE BAD FOR YOU

Some fats are worse than others, says Jaclyn Reutens, clinical dietitian at Aptima Nutrition and Sports Consultants. Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are the better ones, and these include plant-based fats found in olive oil, avocado, nuts, seeds, soya beans and fatty fish.

On the other hand, saturated fats, such as those found in full-fat dairy products (milk, cheese and yogurt), butter, palm oil, beef and pork fat, as well as chicken skin, are associated with more health problems. Jaclyn explains that an excess consumption of saturated fats will increase your levels of low-density lipo-protein (LDL) or bad cholesterol in the body.

More harmful than saturated fats, however, are trans fats from plant oils that have gone through the process of hydrogenation. Sources include hard margarine as well as refined vegetable oils like canola, peanut and rapeseed, vegetable shortening, and baked or commercially processed foods such as pastries, potato chips and even pizza crust.

Excess trans fats not only increase LDL cholesterol but also decrease your high-density lipo-protein (HDL) or good cholesterol levels, says Jaclyn.

Nutrition experts say it's okay to enjoy good fats, but remember that, although they are deemed healthier, they still contain

nine calories per gram, which means an excessive intake can put you at risk of becoming overweight.

(2) YOU ARE PROBABLY NOT EATING ENOUGH GOOD FATS

"Thirty per cent of your diet should be made up of good fats, but you may be surprised to know that most of us are not even getting half of that," says Pooja Vig, nutritional therapist and founder of The Nutrition Clinic.

"After 1984, the focus was on going for low fat. But when we removed fat from our diets, we started eating a lot of carbohydrates in its place to feel satiated. In fact, there is a lot of data showing that there was an increase in weight gain, heart disease, depression and diabetes when communities reduced their fat consumption."

Of course, this doesn't mean that you should load up on high-fat foods. Pooja recommends going for the good fats, and avoiding trans fats as well as refined vegetable oils.

"We can't deny that the modern diet, with its packaged and processed foods, is high in fat, but we have been taught to believe that all fat is bad. And this simply is not true." ►

(3) SATURATED FAT MAY NOT BE TO BLAME FOR HEART DISEASE

A controlled-diet study, carried out by researchers at the Ohio State University in the US and published in the journal *Plos One* in November 2014, found that doubling or even nearly tripling saturated fat in the diet does not increase saturated fat in the blood. As we know, increased levels of saturated fat in the blood tend to raise one's risk of heart disease.

When the subjects' saturated fat intake was increased and their carbohydrate intake simultaneously reduced, the saturated fat in their blood did not go up. In fact, it went down in some people. But when their carbohydrate intake was progressively increased and their saturated fat intake reduced, researchers detected higher levels of the fatty acid palmitoleic acid in their blood. Palmitoleic acid is associated with the unhealthy metabolism of carbohydrates that can promote disease.

However, Lauren Ho, dietitian at the Singapore Heart Foundation, says that just because recent studies have shown that people who ate more saturated fat did not have a higher risk for heart disease than those who ate less, it doesn't mean that you should go overboard with the fatty meats and butter.

"More studies are needed to establish the link between saturated fat and heart disease," explains Lauren. "Some researchers suggest that saturated fat raises a subtype of LDL with large, fluffy particles that is benign, rather than the smaller and denser LDL particles that are more harmful. Nevertheless, most dietitians and doctors would prudently advise you to limit your intake of saturated and trans fats."

She adds: "While saturated fat is still a contentious subject, experts all agree that the biggest culprit is trans fat, as well as a diet that is high in added sugars and refined carbohydrates. So, you can still eat foods like butter or coconut milk, but in small amounts. The Singapore Dietary Guidelines 2003 recommends that your saturated fat intake should comprise less than 10 per cent of your total daily calories."

(4) FAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR A HEALTHY MIND AND BODY

Think you're doing yourself a favour by omitting fat from your diet? Think again. Fat has many important functions in the body.

According to Jaclyn, dietary fat is a carrier for fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. "Each plays an important biological role in the body,

TOO LITTLE FAT CAN CONTRIBUTE TO DEPRESSION AND AN INCREASED RISK OF CANCER AND HEART DISEASE.

POOJA VIG OF THE NUTRITION CLINIC

and a deficiency of any of them may result in conditions such as brittle bones as well as dry skin and mucous membranes."

In addition to being a concentrated source of energy, fat also helps protect our organs – including the liver, heart, pancreas and kidneys – from shock by acting as a type of cushion. Plus, it keeps us warm in cold weather, and plays a role in cellular signalling, too.

Adds Pooja: "On a more serious level, too little fat can contribute to depression and an increased risk of cancer and heart disease. If you are not eating between two and three portions of oily fish a week, I suggest supplementing your diet with a good quality EPA-DHA supplement. If you are not getting enough fat, you may notice that you have stiff joints, bumps on the back of your arms, dry or flaky skin, and brittle nails."

How much fat do we need exactly? For good health, according to the Singapore Dietary Guidelines 2003, we are to limit our total daily fat intake to 25 to 30 per cent of our total calorie intake, of which less than 10 per cent is from saturated fat. For an average adult daily calorie intake of 2,000 calories, the total fat and saturated allowances are 56g to 67g per day, and less than 22g per day respectively.

See a dietitian for more tailored advice, as women with sedentary lifestyles may have a lower recommended daily calorie intake.

(5) HOW YOU USE AND STORE DIFFERENT FATS CAN AFFECT THEIR NUTRITIONAL CONTENT

Shallow-frying your food in extra virgin olive oil is not the right way to reap this fat's health benefits. In fact, by heating the oil at a high temperature, you are stripping it of its goodness.

"Even good oils have different properties and smoking points, so in order to get the most out of them, it's important to use them correctly," says Pooja. "When some oils reach smoking point, they start to break down and release free radicals which can damage healthy cells".

For salad dressings and light sauteing, go for olive oil instead of refined oil. For mid-heat cooking, choose macadamia nut

oil or avocado oil. For high-heat cooking, try coconut oil or organic ghee (clarified butter), recommends Pooja.

When storing unrefined coconut oil, keep it away from heat and light to preserve its nutritional integrity and prevent it from becoming rancid, says Susie Rucker, a nutritional therapist at Body With Soul. "A good way to store it is in a dark glass container in the cupboard. If you don't cook with coconut oil very often, you can store yours in the fridge or even freeze it."

(6) HIGH-FAT DAIRY MAY HELP PREVENT TYPE 2 DIABETES

Research from Sweden, which was presented at the annual European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) meeting in 2014, revealed that people who had eight or more portions of high-fat dairy products per day had a 23 per cent lower risk of getting type 2 diabetes than those who had one or fewer portions per day. The results are contrary to what we have been told all along – that eating high-fat foods can increase our risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

Much like what other studies have shown, the researchers discovered that different sources of fat in the diet affect the risk of type 2 diabetes in different ways. However, more research is still needed, and experts have warned that this does not give us licence to load up on full-fat milk, yogurt and cheese, thinking that it will help protect us against the disease.

An excess consumption of high-fat dairy products can lead to weight gain, which puts people at risk of developing type 2 diabetes to begin with, along with a sedentary lifestyle. As with all other types of saturated fat, moderation is key, and high-fat dairy products should be consumed as part of a balanced diet.

"Focusing on what should be included in a diet or what is good for our health is more important than focusing on what should be avoided," says Jackie Green, dietitian at The Family Dietitian at Osteopathy & Podiatry Centre. "The sooner we take our focus away from fat, sugar or dairy, or whatever the demon of the time is, the better off we will be."



(7) EATING ANIMAL FAT AND HIGH-FAT DAIRY PRODUCTS IS FINE IN MODERATION

If you want that piece of fatty grass-fed beef, go ahead and have it, says Jackie. "I am not against eating these foods in small quantities, as long as they are part of a healthy and balanced diet," she explains.

"Coconut oil is high in saturated fat, but if a recipe calls for a small amount of cold-pressed coconut oil, then use it. The same applies to butter. If taste is important then use a bit."

If you're not eating fat in processed foods, then whatever fat or oil you choose should be consumed in moderation. It's fine to have a variety, just keep the quantity modest. Jackie goes on to remind us that all fats are a concentrated source of calories, which can ultimately lead to weight gain.

"Being overweight is the biggest cause of chronic health conditions worldwide, from certain cancers, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease to even Alzheimer's disease." ■

"THE SOONER WE TAKE OUR FOCUS AWAY FROM FAT, SUGAR OR DAIRY, OR WHATEVER THE DEMON OF THE TIME IS, THE BETTER OFF WE WILL BE."

JACKIE GREEN OF THE FAMILY DIETITIAN



The good eggs

They're loaded with essential vitamins and minerals, packed with protein, and under 80 calories, which is why we should all be eating more eggs. These easy, delicious brunch and lunch recipes, also great for dinner or a holiday get-together, will keep you and your friends full and happy.

Casual weekend gatherings with friends are a real luxury. Still, brunch can mean more than bagels, pancakes and waffles – the makings of an all-day carb coma – and lunch doesn't have to centre around meat. These extravagant egg dishes are a treat, but they'll also give you the protein you need to recover from an extra-tough workout, as well as fortify you for the week ahead. If you're worried about the cholesterol, relax and hold on to those yolks. They are actually full of heart-healthy carotenoids, so skip restaurants, long waits and overpriced dishes, and get cracking!





Use a cookie cutter to turn pumpkin bread into fancy rounds.

Soft Scrambled Eggs, Smoked Salmon and Baby Arugula Sandwiches

SERVES: 6

COOK TIME: 8 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 15 MINUTES

- > 12 slices pumpkin bread
- > 2 tsp balsamic vinegar
- > 1½ tbsp olive oil
- > 5 large eggs
- > 3 egg whites
- > ½ tsp salt
- > 6 handfuls baby arugula
- > 1 tbsp unsalted butter or oil
- > 55g reduced-fat cream cheese, cut into small pieces
- > 2 tbsp finely chopped chives
- > freshly ground black pepper
- > 110g smoked salmon, cut into slices 2.5cm wide

1. Using 9cm cookie or biscuit cutter, cut pumpkin bread into rounds and set aside. In large bowl, whisk together vinegar and olive

oil dressing. In medium bowl, whisk together eggs, egg whites, two tablespoons water, and salt.

2. Toast bread rounds and toss arugula with dressing. Then, in non-stick skillet over medium-high heat, melt butter and swirl to coat. Pour egg mixture into skillet and cook for about two minutes, stirring and scraping egg off sides and bottom of skillet until it thickens but is still loose. Stir in cream cheese and one tablespoon chives. Continue cooking for about one minute more, stirring until eggs begin to set but still appear glossy and moist. Remove from heat.

3. Place toasted pumpkin bread round on each of six plates. Spoon scrambled eggs onto each round, add black pepper and remaining chives to each, and top with smoked salmon slices and arugula salad. Finish each sandwich with bread round and serve.

★ Nutrition score per serving

293 calories, 13g fat (4.5g saturated), 27g carbs, 16g protein, 3.5g fibre, 647mg sodium

Artichoke, Goat Cheese and Sun-Dried Tomato Strata

SERVES: 6

COOK TIME: 55 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 2½ HOURS, INCLUDING AT LEAST 1 HOUR IN THE REFRIGERATOR

- > 16 pieces thinly sliced wholemeal sandwich bread
- > 1 cup coarsely chopped sun-dried tomatoes (not in oil)
- > 280g frozen artichoke hearts
- > 1 tbsp olive oil
- > 6 slices prosciutto (about 55g)
- > 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- > 3 tbsp chopped fresh basil
- > cooking spray
- > 200g goat cheese, crumbled
- > 6 eggs
- > 350ml low-fat or fat-free evaporated milk

1. Preheat oven to 95 deg C. Place bread slices on oven racks and bake for about 20 to 25 minutes, or until completely dried. Turn occasionally to prevent curling. Alternatively, let bread sit out overnight.

2. Meanwhile, soak sun-dried tomatoes in three-quarter cup very hot water for about five minutes, or until softened. Drain and chop into 0.5cm pieces and transfer to medium bowl. Cook artichoke hearts according to package directions, cool, chop coarsely, and squeeze dry in paper towels.

3. In skillet over medium-high, heat oil. Cook prosciutto in batches, turning once or twice, until golden and crisp. Transfer to paper towel-lined plate to drain. Set skillet (with oil in it) aside to use later and blot prosciutto with paper towels to absorb excess oil. Cool and crumble.

4. To reserved skillet, add onion and cook over medium-high for about three minutes, or until softened. Add quarter cup water, reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring frequently, until water evaporate and onions are deep golden brown. Transfer to bowl with sun-dried tomato pieces and toss to combine. Add two tablespoons basil to bowl and mix to combine.

5. Coat 23cm by 28cm baking dish with cooking spray. Line bottom with five slices of bread, breaking or cutting fifth slice to fit. (It's okay to have small gaps between pieces.) Scatter one-third onion, tomato and basil mixture over bread. Top with half of artichoke hearts, one-third goat cheese, and one-third prosciutto. Repeat with five more slices of bread, plus a third more each of tomato, onion and basil mixture, remaining artichoke hearts, goat cheese and prosciutto. Top with remaining six slices of bread. Reserve remaining tomato, onion and basil mixture, prosciutto and goat cheese.

6. In medium bowl, whisk together eggs and evaporated milk. Pour over strata. Cover dish with plastic wrap and place same size dish on top. Weight down with something heavy (like cans of tomatoes) and refrigerate for at least one hour, or overnight. Remove from refrigerator 20 to 30 minutes before baking.



7. Place one oven rack 10cm to 15cm from broiler and the other in middle of oven. Preheat oven to 175 deg C. Scatter remaining tomato, onion and basil mixture, prosciutto and goat cheese over top of strata. Bake on centre rack for 30 to 35 minutes, or until liquid is absorbed and knife inserted into centre comes out dry. Broil on top rack for one to two minutes, or until browned on top. Let strata rest for 10 minutes, sprinkle with remaining basil, and serve.

✱ **Nutrition score per serving**

485 calories, 20g fat (8g saturated), 53g carbs, 29g protein, 8g fibre, 951mg sodium

Prep the strata the night before and leave it in the fridge. In the morning, pop it into the oven and brew some coffee. Brunch – coming right up!

Breakfast Pizza

SERVES: 6

COOK TIME: 12 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 25 MINUTES

- > cooking spray
- > 2 large tomatoes (at least 7.5cm in diameter)
- > flour
- > 450g room temperature pizza dough (preferably wholemeal)
 - > 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil
 - > ½ tsp salt, plus more to taste
 - > ¼ cup chopped fresh basil
 - > 55g fontina, grated (about 1½ cups)
 - > ½ cup thinly sliced roasted red pepper
 - > 55g breakfast sausage, crumbled, cooked (optional)
 - > 6 large eggs
 - > freshly ground black pepper

1. Preheat oven to 190 deg C and coat large pizza pan with cooking spray. Cut tomatoes crosswise into six slices that are each 1cm thick. Remove centre of slices so you have six tomato rings. Seed and finely chop parts of tomato you haven't cut into rings.

2. Dust clean work surface with flour, pat dough into 30cm to 35cm circle, and transfer to pizza pan. Drizzle olive oil over dough and spread evenly over surface. Then sprinkle with one-eighth teaspoon salt. Scatter with half of basil, one cup cheese, half cup chopped tomatoes, half of red pepper and sausage (if using).

3. Evenly space tomato rings around top of pizza and lightly press into toppings. Crack egg into each ring and distribute remaining cheese and red pepper over empty spaces.

4. Bake for 12 to 18 minutes, or until eggs are just cooked. Yolks can be slightly jiggly, but whites should be cooked through. Add salt and pepper to each, and sprinkle remaining basil over pizza. Cut into six slices and serve immediately.

***Nutrition score per serving**

300 calories, 10g fat (4g saturated), 38g carbs, 15g protein, 4g fibre, 442mg sodium



60%

Amount of vitamin D levels in eggs, which has increased over a 10-year period. They also had 12 per cent less cholesterol, possibly due to changes in chicken feed.

SOURCE JOURNAL OF FOOD COMPOSITION AND ANALYSIS





Asparagus, Red Pepper, Gruyere and Ham Frittata

SERVES: 6

COOK TIME: 35 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 50 MINUTES

- > ½ tsp salt, plus more for cooking asparagus
- > ½ bunch asparagus
- > 8 large eggs
- > ¼ cup low-fat or skim milk
- > 1 tbsp dijon mustard
- > ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- > 1 tbsp oil or unsalted butter
- > 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- > 1 small red bell pepper, thinly sliced
- > 3 slices reduced-sodium deli ham, sliced into 2cm strips
- > 1 cup grated gruyere (about 55g)

1. Place one oven rack 10cm to 15cm from broiler and the other in middle of oven. Preheat oven to 175 deg C. Bring small pot of salted water to boil and prepare bowl of iced water. Trim asparagus and cut into 3cm to 4cm pieces, leaving tips slightly longer. Cook for about three to five minutes, or until tender. Transfer to iced water until cool and then drain.

2. In medium bowl, whisk together eggs, milk, mustard, salt and pepper until slightly frothy. In 22cm to 25cm oven-safe skillet over medium-high, heat oil. Cook onion and pepper slices, stirring occasionally, for about three minutes, or until softened. Add ham to skillet and cook, stirring occasionally, for about five minutes more, or until ham, onion and peppers start to brown. Stir in asparagus pieces, reserving six or seven tips, and cook for about one minute, or until just heated through.

3. Pour egg mixture into skillet and cook for about three minutes, pushing egg away from edges of pan occasionally until slightly thickened. Stir in three-quarter cup cheese and place reserved asparagus tips and remaining cheese on top.

4. Transfer skillet to oven and bake on centre rack for about 15 minutes, or until just set. Turn broiler to high. Broil on top rack for one to two minutes or until golden brown. Let rest five minutes, cut into six slices and serve.

* Nutrition score per serving

203 calories, 13g fat (4.5g saturated), 6g carbs, 16g protein, 2g fibre, 352mg sodium

Individual Broccoli-Cheddar Souffles

SERVES: 6

COOK TIME: 45 MINUTES

TOTAL TIME: 1 HOUR

- > cooking spray
- > 7 tbsp flour
- > ¼ tsp salt, plus more for cooking broccoli
- > 225g broccoli florets (about 3 cups)
- > 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- > 1 small shallot, minced
- > 1 cup skim or reduced-fat milk
- > 85g coarsely grated extra-sharp cheddar (about 1½ cups)
- > 5 eggs, whites and yolks separated
- > ½ tsp ground nutmeg
- > ¼ tsp worcestershire sauce
- > 2 egg whites
- > ½ tsp cream of tartar

1. Coat six small souffle dishes, ramekins or oven-safe cups with cooking spray and two tablespoons flour (divided among cups). Gently tap out excess flour and set aside.

2. Bring medium pot of salted water to boil and prepare bowl of iced water. Cook broccoli for about four minutes, or until tender. Transfer to iced water to cool, drain and then finely chop broccoli. Alternatively, steam or microwave broccoli until tender.

3. Preheat oven to 190 deg C. In three-litre to four-litre saucepan over medium, heat butter until melted. Add shallot and cook, stirring occasionally, for about five minutes, or until very tender and starting to turn golden. Add remaining five tablespoons flour and whisk for about one minute, or until smooth. Add milk and cook, stirring constantly, for about two minutes, or until thick. Remove from heat, add cheese, and stir until smooth. Mix in egg yolks, one at a time, until well combined. Stir in nutmeg, worcestershire sauce and quarter teaspoon salt.

4. In deep bowl or stand mixer, combine seven egg whites and cream of tartar. Once beaters start leaving clear tracks in egg whites, stop and pull beaters straight up and out of mixture. When ready, whites will peak and just barely curl at top. Be careful not to overbeat.

5. Fold half of egg whites into pot and transfer contents of pot to mixing bowl with remaining egg whites. Fold until smooth and well combined.

6. Divide mixture between souffle cups. Place cups on baking sheet and transfer to oven. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes – with oven door shut for at least 30 minutes. Souffles are done when tops are firm but springy. Serve immediately.

* Nutrition score per serving

252 calories, 17g fat (9g saturated), 12g carbs, 14g protein, 1.5g fibre, 294mg sodium

Eat them while they're hot. These minis look their best right out of the oven.



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Look Great

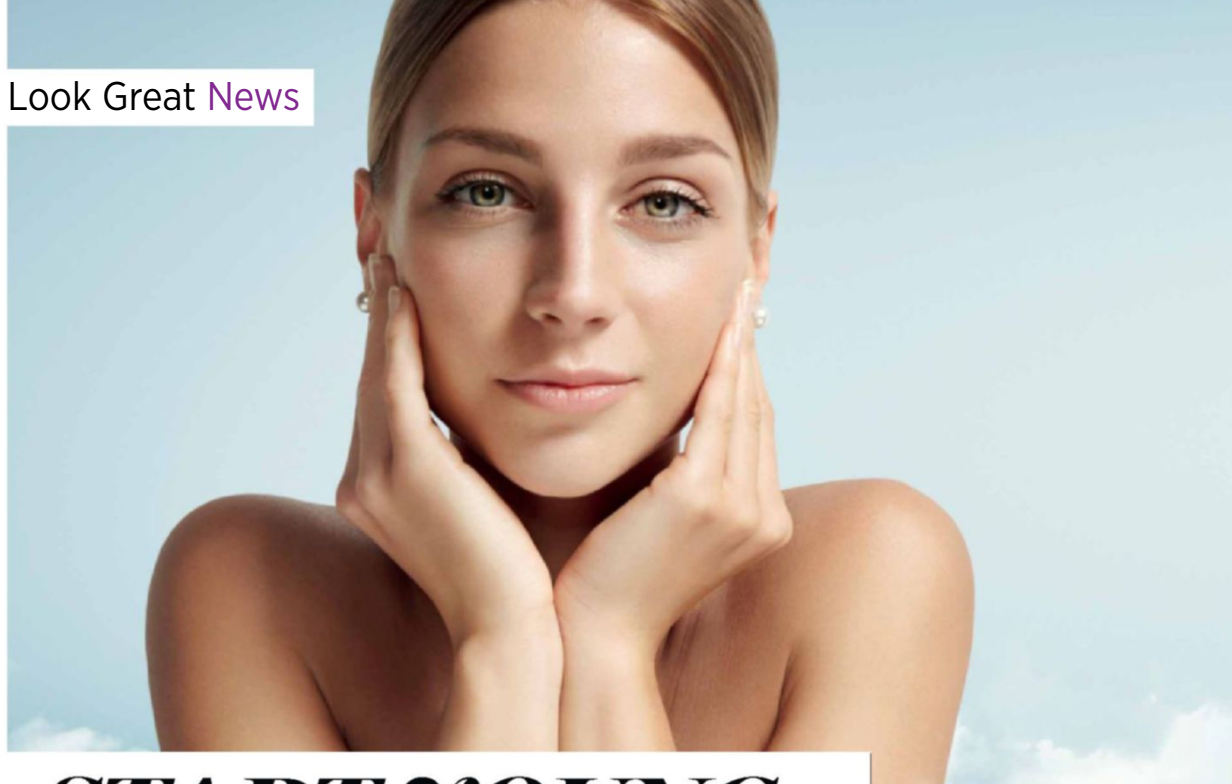
BE AT YOUR MOST GORGEOUS!

Better than hands

The skin-saving secret behind cleansing gadgets? Sonic technology. "Ultrasonic sound waves allow the bristles to flex back and forth, which literally shakes dirt, oil, and makeup out of the pores, and sweeps them off the skin's surface," explains US-based dermatologist Dr Deirdre Hooper. **As the movement also sloughs off dead cells, skin looks more radiant and is better able to absorb products after washing.**

The upshot: Not only is such a tool an investment, but it cleans your skin better than manual cleansing can as well, says Dr Hooper, who suggests using an electric brush twice a week at first. Then, depending on your skin's reaction, gradually increasing the frequency to daily or twice-daily.





START YOUNG

If you don't want to spend a bomb on anti-ageing products later in life, start practising these absolutely essential habits now, says Dr Cheong Wai Kwong, a consultant dermatologist on Shape's advisory board.

- **Hydrate and hydrate.** Dry skin is more prone to irritation and shows fine lines more easily. Your skin absorbs moisturiser best when it's still a bit damp, so slather on cream or lotion within five minutes of a shower.
- **Load up on antioxidants.** Your complexion will benefit from a cream or serum containing these free radical fighters. Antioxidants protect healthy cells against damage and premature ageing.
- **Exfoliate.** Make a once-weekly scrub or peel part of your regime. You'll get cleaner pores and a brighter, clearer complexion. Plus, other products will work better on your skin.
- **Sleep more, move more.** Your lifestyle also plays a huge role in how young – or old – you look. Two rules to stick to: Hit the sack earlier and get your weekly dose of exercise. A recent study by McMaster University in Canada suggests that regular exercise may even help reverse skin ageing.

SHAPE RAVE

Get glowing



What a difference just 60 seconds can make! The Ren Flash Rinse 1 Minute Facial (\$74, Essentials) promises to brighten skin in just a minute, thanks to its key ingredient: water-activated vitamin C.

Trying is believing, and our tester was amazed that her skin felt smoother and looked more radiant after one use. Fine lines and

pores were less visible too.

Caution: While effective, this potent treatment may not suit those with sensitive skin.

GLUTEN-FREE BEAUTY: HELP OR HYPE?



If you're avoiding foods with gluten, a protein found in grains, you may be wondering if your beauty routine should follow suit, especially since a growing number of cosmetics now claim to be gluten-free.

"Commonly found in hair care, skincare and cosmetics, gluten works as an emulsifier to blend all the ingredients together," says Dr Mona Gohara, associate clinical professor of dermatology at the Yale School of Medicine in the US. "Sometimes, it is specified on the ingredients label, but you may also see wheat protein, oil or extract listed."

However, just because you can't eat gluten, it doesn't mean you can't

use it topically, says Dr Alessio Fasano, director of the Center for Celiac Research and Treatment at Massachusetts General Hospital in the US, and author of *Gluten Freedom*.

"People with coeliac disease or gluten sensitivity only get sick when they ingest gluten and it passes through the gastrointestinal tract." That means it's highly unlikely you'll get sick from a beauty product, adds Dr Fasano.

The one possible exception? Your lipply. "Unlike other cosmetics, you actually do ingest very low levels of lipstick," says Dr Fasano, "so this is one instance where it might be good to choose a gluten-free option."



Nail this

A simple way to prevent your nail polish from chipping is to apply cuticle oil to it nightly, says celebrity manicurist Tom Bachik, who has worked with stars like Anne Hathaway, Beyonce and Blake Lively.

"Oil makes polish flexible, which means that if or when you hit your nails, they'll flex and give, instead of crack," he says. No cuticle oil? A few drops of facial oil works just as well.



TAP FOR MORE

48%

The number of women who feel bad about themselves after seeing pictures others post of them on social media. So think twice before uploading that unflattering photo of your BFF!

SOURCE TODAY/AOL IDEAL TO REAL BODY IMAGE SURVEY 2014

HEADS UP

Give your scalp some love with the **PHS Hair Science Detox Restorative Spa Therapy** (\$348 for 150 minutes). The pampering treatment removes chemical build-up on your hair and scalp to promote healthier hair growth. It includes a soothing head and shoulder massage that will have you dozing off in minutes. PHS is located in Ngee Ann City, Plaza Singapura and Wheelock Place.



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The water that makes you feel refreshingly good!



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LOOK FRESH

New moisturisers for radiant, dewy skin.

If you've been hearing the comment "oh, you look so tired" a lot recently, it might be time to start using a brightening product. Swop your moisturiser for one of these newcomers that promise to hydrate and even out the skin tone.

1 Dermalogica Pure Light SPF50 (price unavailable, Asterspring Centres)

How it works This contains a powerful mix of ingredients, like niacinamide and liquorice extract, that help to brighten skin. It also offers high-level protection against both UVB and UVA rays.

2 Vichy Ideal White Meta-whitening Emulsion (\$59, leading pharmacies)

How it works The active ingredients are said to boost skin's metabolism, allowing for more efficient cell renewal. Powerful antioxidants, such as ellagic acid, are said to enhance skin's defence against damage by environmental aggressors that make your complexion look grey and sallow.

3 L'Occitane Reine Blanche Whitening Cream (\$93)

How it works Besides vitamin C, a known skin brightener, this also contains meadowsweet flower extract, which has naturally occurring salicylic acid to help soften dullness-causing dead skin cells so they are shed more easily.



4 Estee Lauder Crescent White Full Cycle Brightening Moisture Creme (\$114)

How it works This anti-inflammatory cream with baicalin extract – a flavonoid derived from the flowering plant baikal skullcap – and antioxidants helps to power up skin's moisture barrier and reduce free radical damage by UV rays and pollutants.

5 Innisfree Whitening Pore Cream (\$47)

How it works Its star active, organic tangerine peel extract from Jeju island, is high in vitamin C and antioxidant-rich flavonoids. You'll love its invigorating citrus scent as well.

6 Strivectin Radiance Refining Moisturizer (\$135, Escentials)

How it works It is said to penetrate skin to slow each phase of melanin or dark spot formation. What's more, it also lightens existing spots for a more even complexion.

7 Shu Uemura Tsuya Skin Youthful Bouncy-fine Cream (\$115)

How it works Rhamnose, a naturally occurring plant sugar, is the key brightening agent in this silky-smooth hydrator. It is said to help speed up cell renewal, so skin appears clearer and more translucent.



SPOTLESS!

No matter how diligent you were about wearing sunscreen, it's almost impossible not to have soaked up a little UV damage. That's why you may have unsightly brown blotches on your arms, legs and every exposed area in between. Here are three ways to reduce dark spots.

LASERS

The most permanent method of removal, a Q-switched laser (like the commonly used Alexandrite and Nd:Yag) is a targeted treatment that zaps excess pigment without harming surrounding skin.

Best for Isolated spots on your hands.

Keep in mind You should avoid getting zapped when you have a tan. "The light won't be able to distinguish between the dark spot and your skin," explains Dr Heather Woolery-Lloyd, director of ethnic skincare at the University of Miami in the US.

You may need two to three treatments over the course of eight weeks to fully remove discoloration – and they're not inexpensive. Plan to shell out anywhere from \$200 to \$800 per session, depending on the number of spots you have and where they're located.

CHEMICAL PEELS

"Peels slough off melanin at the surface level, so skin instantly looks brighter and more even," explains Dr Woolery-Lloyd, who

suggests a series of three to five monthly in-clinic glycolic or salicylic peels to completely clear the area. Prices average \$200 a pop.

Best for Areas with overall splotchiness, like the chest.

Keep in mind To avoid irritation and the risk of scarring, ask your doctor to start with the least powerful concentration and work up from there until the dark spots have faded.

LOTIONS

When it comes to topical brightening ingredients, hydroquinone (HQ) – which decreases the formation of melanin – is the gold standard. It's usually available in a two per cent concentration and must be prescribed by your dermatologist.

Since it's unlikely that you will find HQ in a body product, use a formula made for the face to spot-treat pesky pigmentation. To improve your tone all over, a lotion with a combo of brightening ingredients is best, says Dr Woolery-Lloyd. Examples include vitamin C, kojic acid and liquorice extract.

BEAUTY EXPRESS

Get your beauty fix faster than ever with these 15 tips. Plus, high-speed salon services that get you pampered and pretty in a pinch.

BY KELSEY CASTANON PHOTOGRAPHY JAMIE NELSON



STYLING MICHELLE MCCOOL HAIR LINH NGUYEN MAKEUP GEORGINA BILLINGTON



FLASH FACIAL

You don't have to sacrifice sensational skin for a speedy DIY treatment. Try these step-by-step tricks to a lightning-fast facial.

Clean out pores. Before cleansing, wrap your face with a warm, damp towel for one minute. The heat, which mimics the steam you'd get during a salon service, softens the debris in your pores – so you get a deeper cleanse, faster.

MADLINE GAWRONSKA, LEAD AESTHETICIAN AT THE RED DOOR SPA IN THE US

Scrub for smoothness.

Manual exfoliants slough off dead surface cells within 60 seconds – a full nine minutes faster than most chemical varieties! When time is of the essence, focus on exfoliating just your T-zone and the sides of your nose, which are most prone to clogged pores.

RENEE ROULEAU, US-BASED CELEBRITY AESTHETICIAN

Opt for a hydrating gel mask.

Water-based formulas are absorbed faster than oil-based versions, so you need a mere five to eight minutes, instead of 10 to 15. Mimic the pampering spa experience by gently massaging skin in small, circular motions as you apply the mask to boost circulation and reap muscle-relaxing benefits.

RENEE



MANIC MANI

Get perfectly polished in a minute with these prompt pointers and fast formulas.

Go nude. Lighter colours are less likely than dark shades to show mistakes (like streaks or uneven application), so you can get away with a single coat. Even better, sheers won't stain your nails, so you can skip the base coat. This should get you out of the house two minutes sooner.

JIN SOON CHOI, US-BASED CELEBRITY MANICURIST

Steer clear of glitter polishes.

The speckled pigments create an uneven surface on nails, requiring an extra five minutes of drying time.

PERRY ROMANOWSKI, US-BASED COSMETIC CHEMIST

Stick your hands in the freezer.

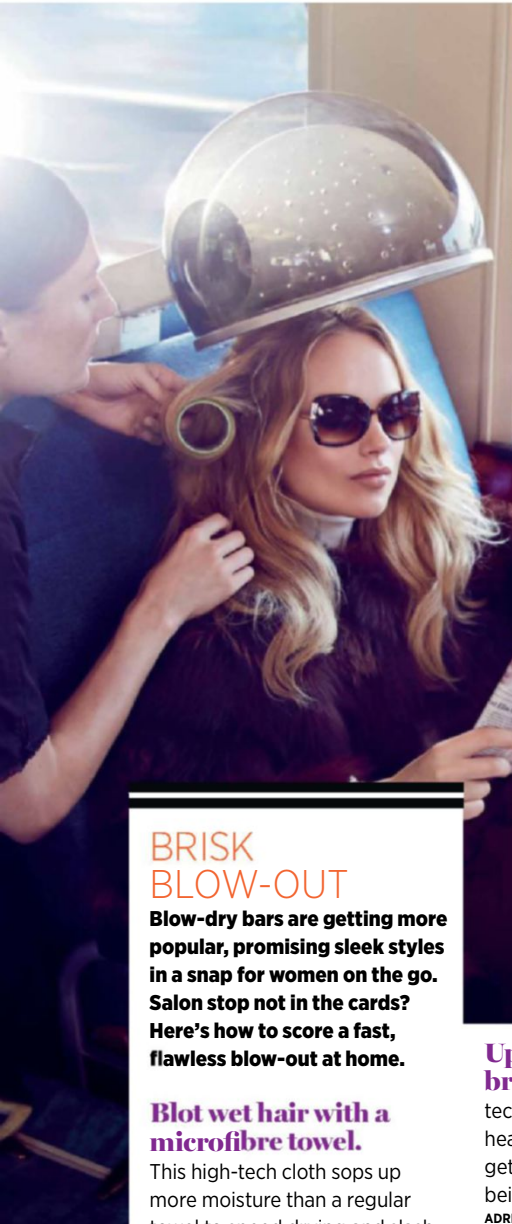
After applying a top coat, wait a minute, and then stick your hands in the freezer for 30 seconds. The circulation of the chilly air evaporates the solvent, setting polish and accelerating the drying process.

PATRICIA NASCIMENTO, MANAGER OF :10 MINUTE MANICURE NAIL SALONS IN THE US

Skip the enamel entirely.

Slather on a thick coat of hand cream and cuticle oil, and let your nails sit for a minute or two. Smooth the nail shape, then push back your cuticles with an orange stick. This will soften hangnails and make cuticles virtually disappear. It takes less than five minutes.

JIN SOON



BRISK BLOW-OUT

Blow-dry bars are getting more popular, promising sleek styles in a snap for women on the go. Salon stop not in the cards? Here's how to score a fast, flawless blow-out at home.

Blot wet hair with a microfibre towel.

This high-tech cloth sops up more moisture than a regular towel to speed drying and slash minutes off your blow-out. If you don't have one, reach for a paper towel instead. It absorbs water quicker than terry cloth. It also won't rough up the cuticle (a recipe for frizz), so post-dry flyaways are minimised.

JIM MARKHAM, FOUNDER OF COLORPROOF EVOLVED COLOR CARE, A PROFESSIONAL LUXURY HAIRCARE LINE

Upgrade to a better brush.

Try one with ceramic technology to evenly retain heat from your dryer, so hair gets drier faster, and without being damaged.

ADRIAN DE BERARDINIS, OWNER OF DE BERARDINIS SALON IN THE US

Choose a pro dryer that's between 1,600 and 1,800 watts.

That's high-powered enough to heat hair quickly, but not so strong that it will damage locks.

EDWARD TRICOMI, STYLIST AND CO-FOUNDER OF WARREN-TRICOMI SALONS IN THE US

Make blow-drying the last step of your morning routine.

Wet strands take longer to dry and require a higher heat setting, which can lead to damage. After you shampoo, apply makeup, iron your outfit, and whip up breakfast. Do anything but pick up a dryer until hair is at least 70 per cent dry (it should feel damp, which usually takes around 30 minutes, depending on its length and texture. You'll score a smooth style in a quarter of the time.

ADRIAN





WAKE UP, MAKE UP

Check out these high-speed shortcuts for a polished look in minutes.

Strategically apply your foundation.

Swipe it on in the shape of a lowercase "t" – vertically down the nose, from between your brows to the lips, and horizontally across the top of your cheekbones. This helps camouflage the redness and discoloration that most often crop up in the centre of your face, and it covers darkness as well as shadows under the eyes.

MATTHEW WAITESMITH, FOUNDER OF ARTIS BRUSH, A MAKEUP BRUSH BRAND IN THE US

Bring on the beauty tools.

While it may seem faster to dab foundation on with your fingertips, using a brush or cosmetics sponge makes blending a breeze (hello, seamless application!), and you won't have to spend time fixing streaks left by your fingers. Bonus: Sponges also work like erasers to instantly clean up any smudgy mistakes.

JESSIE POWERS, MAKE UP FOR EVER US MEDIA EDUCATOR

Utilise the #hashtag for a quicker smoky eye!

Take a charcoal or black pencil liner, draw a pea-sized hashtag on the outer corner of the upper eyelids, and blend inwards with your fingertips for subtle, effortless drama. Finish with a swipe of black mascara.

ACHELLE DUNAWAY, CREATIVE DIRECTOR AND MAKEUP ARTIST FOR E.L.F. COSMETICS IN THE US

Prep your makeup palette.

Searching for and opening even a handful of individual products sucks up more time than you realise, so try to consolidate your everyday essentials, like shadows, concealer, and lipsticks, into one or two palettes.

JULIO SANDINO, CO-FOUNDER AND CREATIVE DIRECTOR OF PUCKER, A MAKEUP STUDIO IN THE US



SPEEDY SERVICES

DON'T WANT TO DIY? VISIT THE SINGAPORE PROS FOR ONE OF THESE COSMETIC QUICKIES.

● BLOW-OUT

Feel like a star with the **Blow+Bar Kerastase Luxury Blowout** (\$100). Get a double cleanse, scalp massage and hot towel mask treatment that adds shine to your tresses before they're blow-dried to perfection – and all in just 45 minutes.

● FACIAL

Perk up your complexion with the **Strip GG2 Facial** (\$450). Each session takes only 30 minutes on average, and promises to help boost radiance and reduce the appearance of fine lines with the use of intense pulsed light (IPL) technology.

● MANICURE

Give your nails some love with the **Manicurious Express Manicure** (\$18). In just half an hour, they'll be shaped, filed and painted to your liking. ☐

Look Great

STRIPES

Cotton knit cropped top, \$360, and midi skirt, \$460, from DKNY. House of Holland Eggie acetate sunglasses, \$260, from Robinsons The Heeren. Leather bag, \$975, from Tory Burch. Kisumu 3S Strawberry Leopard leather sandals, price unavailable, from MBT.

THICK, SKINNY, HORIZONTAL,
DIAGONAL OR VERTICAL,
STRIPES RULE THIS SEASON.

Styling DOLPHIN YEO

Photography WINSTON CHUANG



Cotton-blend mesh top, \$39.90, polyester-blend skirt, \$49.90, and brass pendant necklace, price unavailable, from H&M.

Wool cape, \$76.90, and leather belt with metal studs, \$33.90, from Topshop. Leather slingback wedges, \$53.90, from Charles & Keith. Leather Barnett wrist bag, \$460, from Raoul.



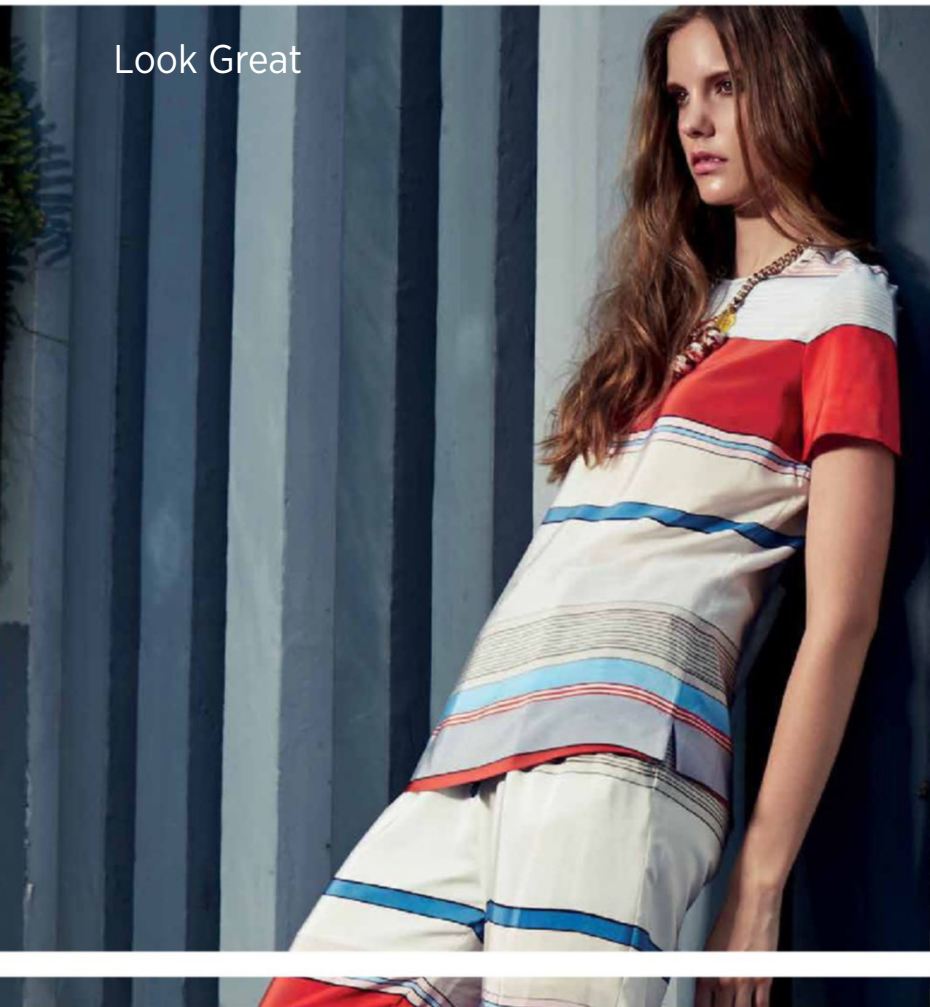
Look Great



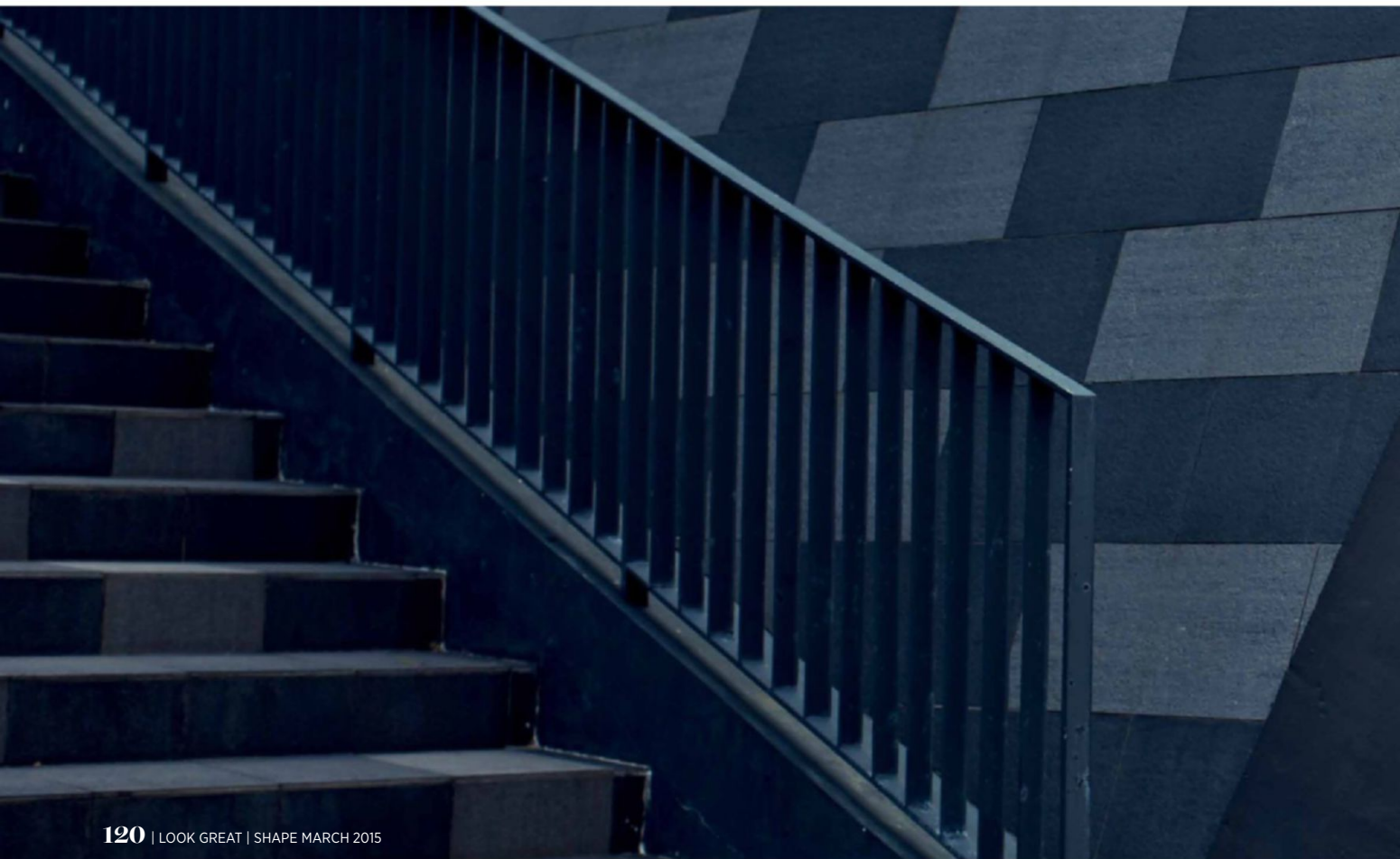
Polyester-blend top, \$79.60, Hayden cotton denim jeans, \$96.90, velvet kimono shrug, \$126, plastic and metal necklace, \$63.90, and leather belt with padlock, \$39.90, from Topshop. Leather loafers with rubber soles, \$56.90, and leather bag, \$63.90, from Charles & Keith.

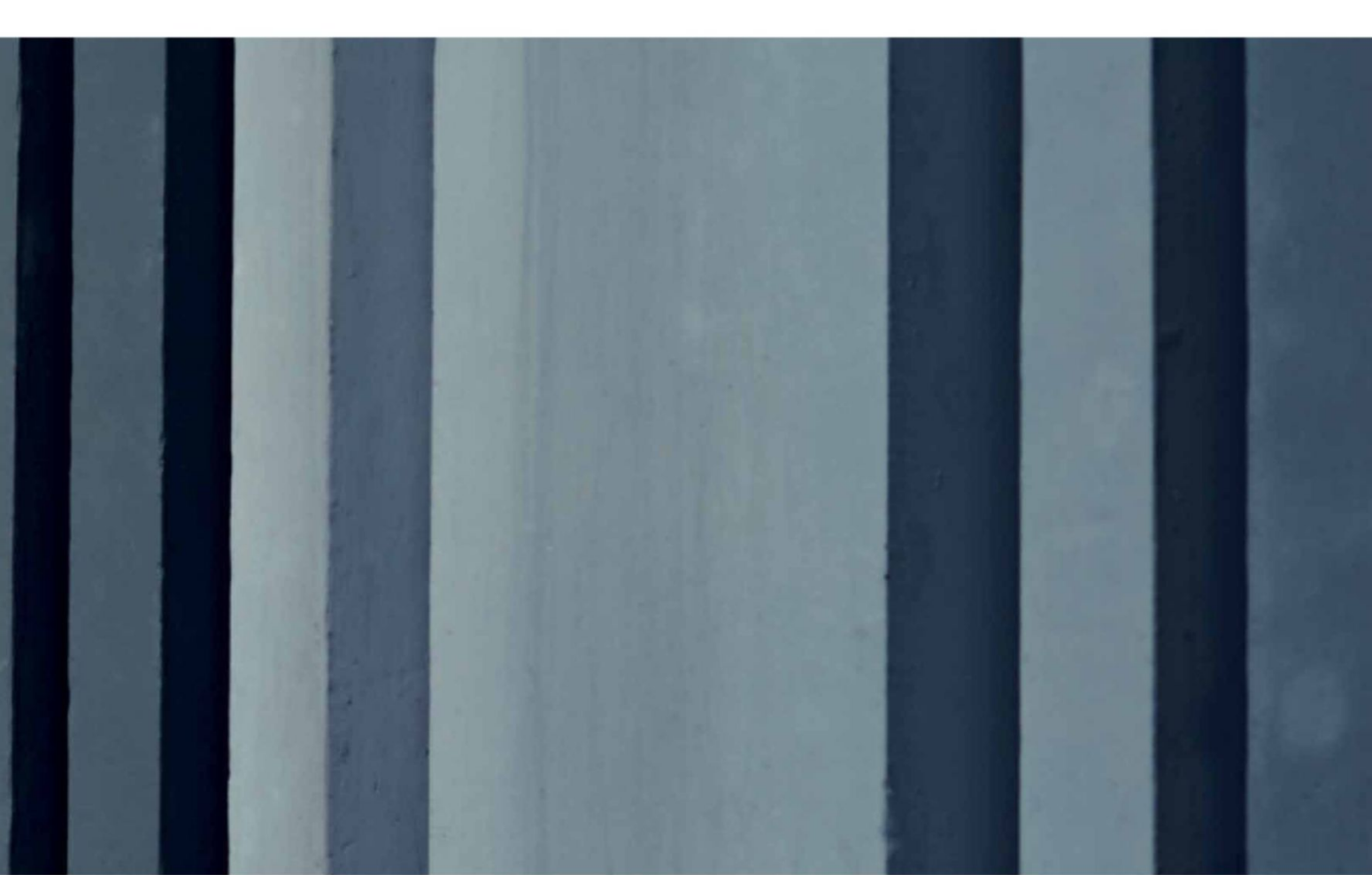


Wool-blend pullover with embellished neckline, price unavailable, from Juicy Couture. Cotton-blend shorts, \$440, from Alice & Olivia. Coated metal necklace and acrylic bangle, \$135 each, from Bimba Y Lola. Leather mules, \$700, from Tory Burch. Metallic leather Lotus backpack, \$560, from Raoul. House of Holland Brown Beater metal framed sunglasses, \$260, from Robinsons The Heeren.



Silk blouse with matching pants, prices unavailable, from Paul Smith. Metal necklace, \$205, from Bimba Y Lola.

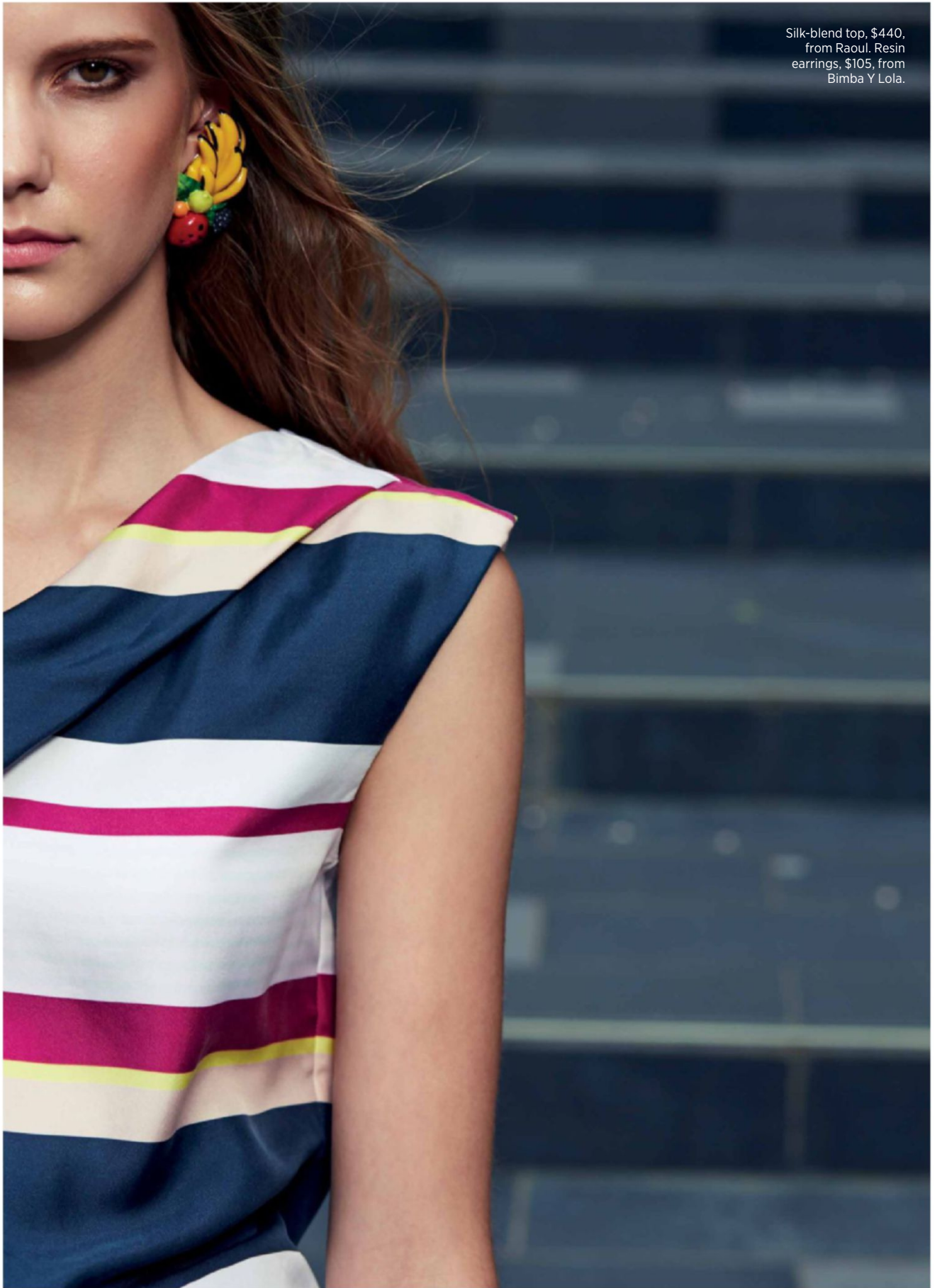




Cotton-blend lace dress,
\$359, leather belt, \$179,
and metal choker, \$169,
from BCBGMaxazria.
Metallic leather clutch,
\$450, from Bimba Y Lola.

Look Great

Silk-blend top, \$440,
from Raoul. Resin
earrings, \$105, from
Bimba Y Lola.





Cotton-blend coat, \$775, with matching skirt, \$370, polyester-blend top with bandeau, \$305, and resin necklace, \$190, from Bimba Y Lola.

ART DIRECTION **RAY TICSAY**
PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSISTANT **ANGELA GUO**
STYLIST'S ASSISTANT **ANGELA CHU**
HAIR **EILEEN KOH** @ **HAIR PHILOSOHY**, USING **REDKEN**
MAKEUP **GINGER LYNETTE** @ **ATELIER**, USING **LANCÔME COLOURS**
MODEL **MCKENNA BIRD/MANNEQUIN**

EVENTS, PROMOTIONS & NEWS

Spotlight

PARK AND RECREATION

Nestled amidst the lush tropical greenery of Bishan Park is Powermoves Pilates in the Park. Newly renovated, with better facilities and bigger premises, the studio is the ideal place to enhance both your body and mind with classes targeted to strengthen core muscles, improve posture, balance and overall well-being.

Try a Pilates Matwork class at the new premises at \$55 per class. Call 6455-2221 or visit www.powermoves.com.sg for more information.



POWER JUICER

Vegetable stems, skins and seeds of fruits are often packed with fibre, antioxidants and vitamins, but we don't eat them often enough.

Now you can extract these nutrients and consume them easily with the Kenko Nutri Bullet blender (\$199). The 600-watt extractor blade breaks down foods like broccoli stems, watermelon seeds and banana skin into drinkable particles.

Available at OG, Robinsons, John Little, BHG, NTUC supermarkets and Kenko showroom. You can also visit www.kenko.com for more details.



BODY BOOSTER

Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of antioxidants known to help delay or prevent cell damage.

If you're not getting your daily requirement from food, you can supplement your diet

with Pomi-T. It packs the antioxidant properties of pomegranates, broccoli, turmeric and green tea into convenient capsules.

Priced at \$49.90 for 60 capsules, it is available at Guardian and Unity, as well as selected hospital pharmacies and clinics. For more information, visit www.pomi-t.sg.

STEP UP

If you like New Balance's award-winning Fresh Foam 980 running shoe, look out for the new Fresh Foam Boracay (\$169).

Thanks to its ultra-plush cushioning and super-soft foam, runners can enjoy the same snug fit, on top of a cushier feel and smoother run.

It has one-piece foam midsoles for enhanced flexibility and ride, while the soft, plush uppers feature a neoprene stretch tongue for a comfortable lace-up.

Available at all New Balance Experience stores. Visit www.newbalance.com.sg for more details.



WORKOUT TIME

No time to exercise or go to the gym? With Fitness First's 30-minute signature classes, you no longer have any excuse not to work out.

Classes such as Freestyle Group Training and Hardcore cater to varying fitness levels and goals, and are designed to provide maximum results within 30 minutes.

To enjoy a free 30-minute Freestyle Group Training HIIT strength or power class, call any one of 16 Fitness First clubs islandwide and quote "Freestyle with Shape". Valid for the month of March only.

For more information, visit www.fitnessfirst.com.sg.



FUSS-FREE FITNESS



Get results in a shorter time with Bodytec Studio's Electro Muscular Stimulation (EMS) Training from Germany. How does it work? Electrical impulse currents are delivered to various parts of the body to stimulate different muscle groups as you work out. Each weekly session lasts 20 minutes. And, according to the trainers, you can see results in just four weeks.

Winner of a *Shape Sports Award* 2015, Bodytec Studios' EMS Training can be customised to your fitness level and goals.

What's more, the workouts have been said to be 18 times more effective than conventional weight training, and can help with back pain management as well.

This May, Bodytec Studio at The Grandstand is inviting 12 readers to a free trial workshop to help you understand more about how EMS training works first-hand.

SHAPE MARCH BODYTEC SPECIAL

Twelve readers will enjoy a free trial workshop worth \$30. Submit your name, contact details and age by March 31 at www.shape.com.sg/bodytec.

DATE: May 1 (Friday)

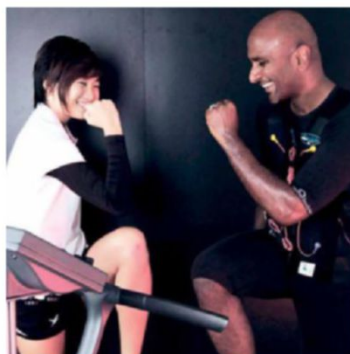
TIME: 1-3pm

VENUE: Bodytec Studio,
#01-24C The Grandstand, 200 Turf Club Road, tel: 6466-0638

Other Bodytec Studios:

- 6 Stanley Street, #01-01, tel: 6423-1306
- 121 Upper East Coast Road, #01-01, tel: 6243-2497

Visit www.bodytec.com.sg or www.facebook.com/BodytecSingapore for more details.



BODYTEC
POWER YOUR BODY

CHATTING UP...

HUGH JACKMAN

The ever-versatile Hugh Jackman can jump from theatre to thriller with ease. The past year has seen him tackle another instalment of the *X-Men* franchise, his Broadway production, *The River*, and robot-ridden sci-fi flick *Chappie* (opens here on March 5). Hugh's film choices may vary but, happily, his family life is one enduring constant.

● **Shape:** You've mastered both film and theatre, and admitted to having accomplished a lot of your acting goals after playing Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*. What worlds do you have left to conquer?

Hugh: Oh, quite a few – I hope. I'm looking to push myself further in the coming years. I feel much more confident about my work now than I did 10 or even five years ago, and I want to play many different kinds of characters. I'm ready to challenge myself in ways that I wasn't prepared or willing to do so before and that's kind of exciting for me.

● **S:** Do you remember what first inspired you to become an actor?

H: Performing has always been in my blood, although it was my sixth grade teacher who gave me a lot of encouragement and confidence. I remember coming home very excited one day, and saying: "Oh Dad, I really want to do this." He was really encouraging. But one of my brothers said: "You sissy..." so I never mentioned it to him again. But, when I was 18, my dad took us to see *42nd Street*, the musical. My brother said: "I really want to apologise." I asked him what for: "Remember when you were younger and I said you were a sissy for dancing? I was such an idiot. You should've been dancing for the last eight years. You should've been up there doing that." The next day I signed up for dance classes!

● **S:** Aside from acting, you've made a very happy life for yourself together with your wife Deborra-Lee and your two children. Is that what counts most for you?

H: They're the basis of everything I do. It

would mean very little to me to have a successful career and not be able to share it with my family. Work has its satisfactions, but it's nothing compared to the joy you take in being with your family and looking after your kids. My father – even though he won't really talk about it – still feels regret that he wasn't able to spend as much time with me and my brothers as he would have liked, even though he had a very important job and he did his best after my mother left. When we talk, he never asks me about work, only about Deb and the kids.

● **S:** Did you know Deb was "the one" when you first met her?

H: There was something that clicked between us right away. It was the feeling you get, when you sense this connection that tells you this is the kind of woman you want to have in your life. You don't even think about it; you just know that it's going to work between you and that's exactly how it's been ever since. I wasn't even looking to settle down at the time – I was happily single. Meeting Deb has been a blessing. We have a beautiful life together.



Catch Hugh in *Chappie*

From the director of *District 9* and *Elysium* comes *Chappie*, starring Hugh Jackman, Sharlto Copley, Dev Patel and Sigourney Weaver. Like any child, *Chappie* will come under the influence of his surroundings – some good, some bad – and he will rely on his heart and soul to find his way in the world. But there's one thing that makes *Chappie* different from anyone else: he is a robot – the first with the ability to think and feel for himself. That's a dangerous idea, and *Chappie* will face powerful, destructive forces determined to ensure he is the last of his kind. **Q**

CHAPPIE MOVIE STILL: SONY PICTURES RELEASING INTERNATIONAL (SINGAPORE)





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#03-10 Plaza Singapura
(6339-0855)

BCBGMAXAZRIA

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(6737-0682)

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#B2-14 Ion Orchard
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STRIP

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QASHQAI



X-TRAIL



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MURANO

QASHQAI: Available in 1.2L Turbo & 2.0L | Fuel Consumption: 5.6-6.9L/100km | CO₂ Emission: 129-159g/km

X-TRAIL: Available in 2.0L | Fuel Consumption: 7.5L/100km | CO₂ Emission: 178g/km

JUKE: Available in 1.6L | Fuel Consumption: 6.3L/100km | CO₂ Emission: 145g/km

MURANO: Available in 2.5L | Fuel Consumption: 9.2L/100km | CO₂ Emission: 212g/km



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Actual specifications may vary from image shown. Specifications vary from model to model.